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# THE TALE OF A FOX



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WHAT KIND OF A PRESIDENT  
WOULD HE MAKE  
?





# THE TALE OF A FOX



AS KANSANS KNOW  
ALFRED M. LANDON

By

**BURT COMER**

**BURT COMER**

Publisher

**616 Fourth National Bank Building  
WICHITA, KANSAS**

TO  
Polly and the Kids  
With the Hope They May Always  
Have Cause to Be Proud of Their Government  
and  
TO  
the Pals Who Have So  
Faithfully Supported My  
Efforts to Tell This Tale

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## FOREWORD

While I offer no apologies for presenting to the American people the facts set forth herein, I feel that the reader is entitled to know my motives for telling the tale of a Fox.

I have been reared as a Republican, and taught to revere the name of Alexander Hamilton and the memory of Abraham Lincoln. Under the provisions of the Kansas "branding iron" law, I am a registered Republican voter of Wichita, Kansas, where I practice law and try to make a living for my wife and three kiddies.

As a Republican, I hope I am a progressive. If the Cleveland Convention had nominated a Republican candidate for President of the United States whom I could conscientiously support, this tale would have remained untold.

But, living here in Kansas, and knowing the facts—knowing the record and history of the man the Republican Party this year has selected as its ostensible leader, I honestly and sincerely believe that to elect this man to the exalted office of President of the United States would result in writing "Finis" to the Grand Old Party, and culminate in dire catastrophe to the nation.

Trading horses in the middle of the stream is not a good practice, any time. But, if a trade is to be made, we will not openly trade a thoroughbred for a bronco, if we know it. We may not like the color of

the thoroughbred. He may not have won all his races on a muddy track. But we surely do not want the mustang—the “strawberry roan” of the cowboy radio crooner—in our stable at all, in any event, or for any purpose.

So, to the American people I present the facts, which the forces of reaction are trying desperately to keep a secret. To my fellow Americans, who put welfare of country, of home and family, and of their fellow men, above narrow partisanship, I appeal to you to be cautious, and—be not deceived by loud noise and false propaganda.

“Fiat justitia ruat caelum.”

Burt Comer.

Wichita, Kansas  
4th of July, 1936.

## QUOTATIONS FROM THE TALE OF A FOX

He is said to have jumped up on a settee and started to sing.

And then Hell broke loose and a scandal shook the state house dome.

Balancing and juggling are very similar physical feats and maybe Landon and his crew got the words mixed.

Governor Landon the **friend** of labor called out the militia.

Then, dirtiest of the dirty tricks, they even smash and chop up the toilets.

We Kansans are unable to follow his logic, if any.

He took a valiant stand for 60c license tags.

He nervously read the manuscript and vetoed a couple of pages that dealt with Landon and the Finney check.

But you all know the story about the man that "took in too much territory" and the United States of America is a **lot** of territory.

Derrick met Alfred in a downtown drug store and read his pedigree in words such as oil men know how to use.

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# I

## MEET THE FOX

Every fox has a **tail**. Occasionally, an especially notorious fox also has a **tale**.

When a man is dubbed with a disparaging nickname which persists on through the years, there is invariably some reason for it. For instance, "Machine gun" Kelley, "Pretty boy" Floyd and "Johnnie the Rat," earned their nicknames.

Throughout Kansas it is explained that years ago at the Kansas University, the aristocratic Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity were initiating their freshmen and, as a feature of the usual horseplay connected with such an inspiring program, a group of the "froshes" were ordered to produce sufficient chickens to provide the "piece de resistance" for the brothers' banquet—and they were forbidden to buy the fowls. Among the group thus detailed for this dangerous adventure was the pampered son of a wealthy man from Independence, Kansas, i. e., one Alfred Mossman Landon.

But the boys, not being experienced chicken thieves, were all caught. All, did I say? Well all but **one** of them. Alf got away, and it is said greatly enjoyed the predicament of his fellow freshmen. But because he could sack a hen roost and slip away clear and clean, the Chapter dubbed him "The Fox" and it is still "Fox Landon" across the prairies and wheat fields of Kansas—beyond the borders of which State he was unknown until the powerful Hearst newspapers and magazines suddenly began to play him up to the public as a presidential possibility.

Since those good old college days, the old fox has given the hunters some lively chases. He has been in some tight places. When the bond scandal broke, it looked as though the hounds were between him and his hole and that he had made his last run. But the same foxy instincts that enabled him to save himself from disaster in a college boy prank, were manifest and he again escaped with only a few bites—and very sore feet.

Mr. Landon is not fond of his nickname. For instance, the time he met an old friend in front of the Post Office at his home town of Independence, Kansas:

“Hello, Pinkey!”

“How are you, Fox?”

“Say, for —— sake —— —— it, quit calling me Fox.”

“Well, you called me Pinkey.”

“Yes, but that was your nickname in school when you played football and baseball.”

“Well, your name in school was Fox.”

“I know, but I am getting into politics now and I don’t want to be called Fox.”

“O. K., Fox,” replied Pinkey.

I submit that a fox cannot become an elephant even with the desperate efforts of the Hearst publications, the astute manipulations of John D. M. Hamilton (the man of destiny) and the back-fence whisperings fostered by the so-called Liberty League.

The writer is a Republican. I have been trained in the school of Hamilton, (Alexander, I mean—not



John D. M.). I am not a candidate and have no personal interest in the matter, except such as any citizen of this great nation should have in helping select suitable public officials. But when I listened to the speech placing Governor Alfred M. Landon in nomination for the presidency, I decided, as the preposterous, absurd, ridiculous ballyhoo rasped in the ears of the radio audience, that the other side of the story should be told. Out here in Kansas, we KNOW that the statesmanlike virtues attributed to Landon in that nomination speech, are as far from the truth as the fruitful plains of Kansas are from the snow clad wastes of Greenland's icy mountains. And I determined to let it be known from border to border and coast to coast, in Alaska, the Philippines and points west, what is common, everyday knowledge in Kansas.

## II

### THE POWER OF BALLYHOO

Listeners on the radio on the night of June 11th, 1936, must have marvelled that such a genius and master statesman, as Alf M. Landon was pictured in his nomination speech, could for so long have hidden his talents and kept his light under a bushel. A listener, not knowing Mr. Landon, would, quite naturally, have occasion to resent the fact that during those "Three Long Years" (meaning, of course, 1930, 1931 and 1932) this super-statesman had not come forth, like St. George, and offered battle with the dragon of depression.

The politician who made the nominating speech, after accusing the President of the United States of abusing his power, circumventing the Courts, fostering monopoly, squandering money—in fact, calling the President everything but his right name—then launched into a paean of praise for his candidate. Landon was pictured as a hard working oil man, laboring with the drillers and truck drivers on his oil leases—fraternizing with farmers. Very, very funny, to us, who know him. Alf was depicted as a self-made man, like the hero of an Alger book, tearfully leaving a poverty stricken home and going out into the cold, cruel world, and single handed, by hard work, honesty and rolling his own cigarettes he had run the fleet horse of "Success" into the corral and put his saddle on him.

As a matter of fact, Alf was not born with any two strikes on him. His father, John Landon, came out to Kansas and through Pennsylvania connections

became associated with The Kansas Natural Gas Company, which had a practical monopoly on the distribution of natural gas over a third of the populous portion of the state. Mr. John Landon was, and is, personally popular. Many a Montgomery County Kansas man, in recent years, has said he wished Alf's father was a candidate instead of the son.

It is none of my business whether John Landon "spoiled" his son by over-indulging him in luxury. But the fact remains that young Alf did **not** have to go out into the oil fields as a laborer, and in fact, all he knows about hard work he has learned by watching it done by someone else. Alf was just an ordinary small town boy, being furnished with plenty of money by over fond parents, and being disliked by other young people for being a snob.

In 1912, the first symptoms of political itch began to manifest themselves and he played around with the Bull Moose. But you shouldn't hold that against him. Practically all the big shots of the Republican party were doing it—except Charley Curtis. In the meantime, Alf got into the oil business. His father's position in the wholesale gas distributing business and furnishing the boy with working capital, were right helpful, and Alfred's marriage to the daughter of a high official in the Standard Oil organization, didn't exactly handicap him in eking out room rent and managing to meet the grocery bill—and "meeting his payroll," which Mr. Hamilton seems to think is so wonderful. No, no, gentle readers, don't misunderstand Mr. Hamilton to the point of thinking Alf's hands are calloused, or that the stoop in his shoulders is caused, by physical labor. Fortunately, Kansas has laws that require employers to meet their payrolls. Surely Lan-

don met his payrolls, but John Hamilton, through oversight, of course, just didn't get around to tell us in this nominating speech, (heralded as "the effort of his life") that Landon is known as the lowest paying oil operator in the mid-continent field.

Came the year of Grace, 1928. Clyde Reed, newspaper publisher at Parsons, and one of the Henry Allen crowd, saw possibilities of oil connections in politics by taking John Landon's boy, Alfred, into his flock. Alf's little chore was to replenish the war chest. State employes of the Ben Paulen Administration were "invited" to contribute. Ben Adams, utilities shogun of Kansas City, Kansas, wanted to make a little donation to the cause. But there were witnesses present and Alf virtuously declined to take the filthy money of a hated gas company. Oh! no, his chief would not accept campaign funds from corporations. Besides it was positively prohibited by law. **But**, as soon as Alf could get away from his companions, he doubled back across the street and took the \$5,000.00 campaign gift offered. Foxy, eh? And, folks, I really doubt if Clyde Reed ever knew anything about it.

The plan was for Alf M. Landon to be Chairman of the State Republican Committee. Under the Kansas laws an ambitious politician must, to be state chairman, start at the bottom and work up; he must first be elected precinct committeeman, and then Chairman of his County Central Committee. As such, he is ex-officio a member of the State Central Committee, and then eligible for State Chairman. So Alf runs down home to Independence, Kansas, and files for the lowly office of precinct committeeman in the Republican primary election in August, 1930.

But lo and behold, when the tired election board

had finished counting the ballots, in the home precinct of Alfred M. Landon, his neighbors in the nearby blocks, in spite of John Landon's popularity, had cast 146 votes for Alf, but 209 of the Republicans in the precinct had elected one C. H. Smith. The Hearst ballyhoo wasn't in working order then. So the boys had to make other arrangements for a State Chairman.

Mr. Reed was nominated and elected Governor and made a splendid executive. But the old guard couldn't boss him around. John Hamilton at that time was the errand boy of that wise old political leader, Dave Mulvane—who was to Kansas what Boise Penrose was to Pennsylvania. The Mulvane crowd embodied the leadership of the conservatives—the “stand-patters.” Governor Reed was, by nature, a progressive. Moreover, Reed had a faculty of resenting any attempt to lead him around by the nose, and he didn't get along so well with Dave and his boys. Anyway, they “turned the heat” on Governor Reed, and defeated him for renomination for Governor in 1930.

Far be it from the Fox to ride a losing horse. Mr. Landon promptly made peace with the reactionaries, traded his birthright for a mess of pottage, and sold the Progressive element of Kansas Republicans down the river. And with that perfect machine for disseminating ballyhoo, the old guard caused the name of Landon to be mentioned, simultaneously, in every county court house in the State. They managed to defeat poor old Lacey Simpson for the nomination, because the Progressives had not yet awakened to the fact that they had been set adrift. And Landon was elected Governor in 1932. But how! By fostering, under cover, of course, the most foul, contemptible, ruthless whispering campaign and vilification against his opponents

ever witnessed in the annals of politics throughout these 48, more or less, independent and sovereign states.

Landon seemed to have hired all the printing presses in Kansas to print circulars, which did not comply with the law, setting up the most astonishing, silly, foolish, absurd and, at the same time, dirty, slavish, smeary slush and insinuations that a diseased mentality could imagine. These malicious circulars, together with filthy salacious post cards and scandal sheets, besmeared with the slime of the sewer and effluvia of the barnyard, were placed in every home, office, shop, store, automobile and doorstep within the borders of Kansas. The excellent wife and little fair-haired four year old boy of one of the candidates were victims of these foul assaults. "Women and Children First" meant nothing to these character assassins.

A prominent Kansas newspaper stated:

"The records stand, and will stand forever, just what the Republican Leadership have done in not one, but many forms of personalities in this, the most abusive, muck raking, slander spreading, insinuations and half truths ever known in the history of Kansas."

Oh, yes, Alf was the choice of the people. Some 794,000 worthy Kansans turned out to exercise the manly art or personal privilege of suffrage, and Alfred M. Landon received 278,000 votes. Franklin D. Roosevelt at the same election, received 424,000 votes. But because there were three candidates in the field, Landon, having a scant plurality, was declared elected. And again in 1934, by running on Mr. Roosevelt's platform and promising in every speech to cooperate with Roosevelt, he was re-elected.

And yet the 1936 Republican convention is so manipulated as to nominate this man with no serious intended opposition. Great, indeed, is the power of ballyhoo.

Now that fate decrees that Mr. Landon will be the opponent of President Roosevelt in the 1936 campaign, it appears that the Landon method of mud-slinging, abuse and vilification is getting an earlier start than we imagined. A large daily newspaper of Republican complexion carried, on June 13, 1936, just two days after the Cleveland convention nominated Governor Landon for its presidential candidate, this encouraging headline—

“Campaign To Smear Roosevelt Started.”

### III

## WET OR DRY?

The answer is "Yes."

In Kansas for the past two generations the dominant factor in politics has been neither the Republican nor Democratic parties, but the Anti-Saloon League and affiliated groups, such as the W. C. T. U. This supposedly non-partisan group has ruled the State government with an iron hand. Except in cases of accident, no ambitious politician need labor under any delusion of hope of success, until and unless this radical organization had placed its stamp of approval upon his brow.

Be it understood, however, that support of the Anti-Saloon League ticket had nothing whatsoever to do with the politician's personal use of intoxicating liquor. All that was required was a valiant stand, on the stump and platform, thunderously denouncing Demon Rum, and the prohibitionist orator was then at liberty to retire to his hotel, send the bell boy after some bottled-in-the-barn whiskey or bath-tub gin, and proceed to get as loop-legged as he wished.

Notwithstanding the sudden present anxiety of the Republican party over the vital question of "personal liberty," the "drys" have held the G. O. P. of Kansas, in an ever tightening grip, since the time of Governor St. John, (of "40 acres and a mule" fame). State Legislators, Attorneys-General, Governors, State Supreme Justices and United States Senators have all had to bend the knee to the Directors of Dry forces.

Alfred M. Landon has been no exception. He has



hewed the wood and carried the water and run the errands for the Drys during all of his political career. **In public**, (until his advisers decided that a dry stand would not go so big in the East) Alfred was as dry as W. J. Bryan.

In 1932 he made the following statement in his opening campaign talk (one couldn't call it a speech) at Abilene, Kansas:

"I pledge myself, that if I am elected Governor, I will bring to bear every resource within my power to secure strict enforcement of the law. The present prohibitory law **CAN** and **MUST** be enforced."

In 1934, while Kansans were taking a vote on whether they would continue to drink their liquor in toilets or amend the constitution and try to learn to drink like ladies and gentlemen, Governor Landon was running for re-election, (on a platform of cooperation with President Roosevelt). But on the liquor question Alf knew better than to favor repeal. As he stumbled through his speech, prepared by his newspaper men, Alf would suddenly try to wax eloquent and with an exceedingly awkward gesture with his right hand, he would say:

"But it is not only with **material** things that we are concerned. We must be concerned with the **spiritual** things, and I favor retaining the State constitutional amendment forbidding intoxicating liquor."

And the drys, in the audience under the tall elms in the Court house lawn, would clap and applaud and look as pleased as a basket of kittens after a full meal of cream. Then Alf would conclude his "oratorical" efforts, go to the home of the local Republican boss and fortify himself with a shot of Kansas best and

proceed to the next town.

Sometimes, of course, he would let his foot slip. When Kansas' native son, Charley Curtis, made his speech in Topeka, accepting the Vice-Presidential nomination, Alf couldn't help celebrate as the occasion required. He must have forgotten where he was and imagined he was in his old haunts in the Grund Hotel down in Kansas City, Kansas, instead of in the lobby of the dignified Jayhawk Hotel in Topeka. He is said to have jumped up on a settee and started to sing. Alf is no John McCormick, and his musical ability is on a par with his oratory. The bored gathering tolerated this exhibition, but when he attempted to embrace a lady, her husband objected, and Governor Reed (seriously embarrassed) exclaimed, "This is terrible," and helped put Alf on the elevator and sent him up to his room.

But the good ladies of the W. C. T. U. didn't mind. Like the man who was told of certain lapses in his family, they "just didn't believe it." Had not Alfred answered "Yes," in their questionnaire, when asked, "Are you personally dry?" So long as Alf's public utterances kept coming by word of mouth, or by "interviews" in newspapers, attributed to him, they backed him to the limit.

For instance, in the 1934 campaign, while certain preachers were haranguing their flocks and driving them to get out and fight the forces of the devil, the faithful obtained a supply of dry campaign buttons. One bright Sunday morning in October, shortly before the November election, the little tots came parading out of Church in their Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes, and upon each of them was a "Landon for Governor" button. Some irate parents demanded to

know, how come? It was explained as a mistake; that it was intended to give the kids the "dry" buttons. But they never have explained how the Landon buttons happened to be there in Church at all. Many parents, objecting to the Church being turned into a political club, took their children out of Sunday school. Which, to an extent, explains why, in the Orpheum Theatre at Wichita, Kansas, on June 16, 1936, where it is reported Landon's picture, flashed on the screen, brought forth hoots, groans, cat-calls, and a varied assortment of bronx cheers, the din subsiding only when the ushers threatened to discontinue the show.

In his message to the legislature in 1933, Governor Landon said,

"The situation in Kansas with regard to beer has become intolerable, and I urge you to do something about it."

Typical Landon tactics; "do **something** about it." Do **what**? The legislature looked at each other and inquired as to what the state administration wanted done. Should they amend the law, define the alcoholic content to be 3.2, and permit and tax it? Should they declare the limit to be  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1%? Alf just left it for the legislature to figure that out. Result—nothing. Beer is neither lawful nor unlawful. It is unregulated and untaxed as far as the state government is concerned. It leaked out in the 1934 campaign that a contingent of beer dealers conferred with Governor Landon, and were assured they would have nothing to fear from him, while all over the state the Drys were working, day and night, for Landon for Governor because he was a dry.

What, then, was the consternation of the good ladies of the W. C. T. U. when in 1936, Governor Landon, their foster political child, declined to per-

mit his name to be used as one of the directors of that worthy and militant organization. Such insubordination was unthinkable and unendurable. But what caused the Drys to scream with rage was an article found in the magazine "Time" recently. The author, in trying to give Landon a build-up, mentioned, parenthetically, that the Kansas Governor was a man who liked "his occasional high ball." Now, where does he get the ingredients for high balls in this constitutionally dry state? And how often is "occasional"? Judging from statements of Alf's pals and former pals, now discarded, "occasionally" must mean about every five minutes—provided of course somebody else furnished the liquor.

Fighting for constitutional state prohibition, between drinks, was good political strategy locally in Kansas. But Alf has lifted his gaze beyond the state line. He has read about himself in the Hearst publications. The W. C. T. U. was a sure-footed horse to ride thus far, but on the long road toward the White House the old nag is too slow and too much of a handicap—and Alfred M. Landon, the politician, surnamed "The Fox," doesn't believe in carrying dead timber. The W.C.T.U. can't help him any more, so to — with them.

These, gentle readers, are a few facts that John Hamilton didn't have time to tell you about, on the night of June 11th, 1936.

## IV

### CIVIL SERVICE

As part of the dramatics at the Cleveland Convention, John Hamilton prefaced his remarks by reading a purported telegram from Governor Landon, in which, among other things, Mr. Landon is supposed to have favored the extension of the civil service. You know, there is a lot of speculation about that alleged telegram. Some argue that the first that Landon knew about it was when he heard it read over the radio. Others maintain that it had been prepared by Bill White or Cliff Stratten and held on ice for the proper time. No one, even among Landon's ardent supporters, has the slightest idea that Alf wrote it. But such is the way politics is played. Platforms furnish material for campaign orators, but no intelligent person takes them very seriously—particularly is this true of candidates after election.

Still, when a candidate undertakes to place a definite personal interpretation on his party's platform, the voters have a right to assume he is more or less sincere. If Alfred M. Landon, since being stung with the presidential bee, is in favor of political jobs being held on merit, experience and ability, instead of as a reward for political activity, he has had a complete re-birth in the last month or two. Not in two decades has there been a political boss, or public official, in Kansas, who subscribed to and put in force with more rigor the old time honored slogan that "the tail goes with the hide." And that goes from appointed officials in the State House to stenographers and janitors. Even in the highway department the men who drive

the trucks and wield the pick and shovels must get the endorsement of the local county or precinct boss, before he is "eligible" to get on the Landon highway payroll.

Mr. Landon can't make a speech, and is reputed to have no original ideas as to governmental science, but don't get the idea that he is anybody's fool, when it comes to machine politics. He is not hampered with any nonsensical tom-foolery about efficiency or non-partisanship. President Roosevelt has been and is now severely criticized by Democrats for leaving so many Republicans in office. But you hear no criticism from Republicans, that Governor Landon has, at any time, failed to replace any Democrat with a good Landon Republican.

In 1930, after Mr. Haucke had defeated Governor Clyde Reed, for the Republican nomination, Mr. Landon met the Democratic candidate in a certain room in the Baltimore Hotel in Kansas City, MISSOURI, and made a deal with him. That meeting is referred to in Kansas as the "Missouri Compromise of 1930." In return for Landon's support, the Democratic candidate agreed to split the patronage 60-40. Politics is notoriously dirty and pre-election promises are often not highly regarded—but to the credit of the Democrat, let it be known that he kept his word with Alf Landon who got control of practically half the patronage of the Democratic administration, then ran for Governor, defeated the Democrat for re-election and then promptly kicked out every appointee who had the slightest Democratic leanings.

As one example, among many, there was Jess Thompson, of Greenwood County, who worked as a gang boss on the Woodring highway department. Jess was and is known to be one of the best road builders in the State. He can build a road bed, and yet man-

age to let traffic through. The men under him called him a slave driver, because he made them all work, and he worked hard right along with them. Jess didn't have any time for political activity, but devoted all his time and efforts on the public roads under his charge. But he was registered as a Democrat and admitted voting for Woodring's re-election. So, shortly after Governor Landon's inauguration he was replaced by a Landon supporter who was a registered Republican. The newly appointed County foreman (former head of the local Young Republican Club) explained to Jess in this language:

"I am sure sorry, Jess. You are a damn good man and I wish I could keep you. But, —well—Jess, you are just on the wrong side of the fence."

I am not criticizing Governor Landon for partisanship. But I point out his record to indicate the hypocrisy and duplicity of his sudden avowal of a broadening of the civil service.

Mr. Landon's newly discovered love for the Civil Service and his past record just do not add up and come out even. And if he should be elected (perish the thought) the civil service will be relegated to innocuous desuetude, and enforced just about like prohibition is now enforced in Kansas.

I asked a Landonite what he expected to get out of boosting Landon, since all Federal employees were to be put on civil service, in the event of Landon's election. He replied:

"Oh, that won't go into effect until all the Democrats and Progressives have been kicked out, and we get in, and then no Democrat or Progressive will be allowed to take the examination."

This misguided brother thought he was "kidding," of course. But he probably is not so far from being a prophet.

## V

### BONDS

Seldom, in a man's life, comes an opportunity to demonstrate leadership as met Alfred M. Landon when he was sworn in as Governor of Kansas. It is true, that he had never before tasted the sweet fruits of victory in an election, and he made the raffle by but few votes over one-third of those cast for Governor. But, nevertheless, we found him the chief executive of Kansas—the typical prairie state.

Unemployment, low prices, mortgage foreclosures, scarcity of money, stagnant business and general fear prevailed on the farms and in the towns and cities. Petty crime was keeping town marshals, the police and deputy sheriffs busy. Radical teachings were spreading to the normally docile and long suffering tillers of the soil, and armed resistance to foreclosures was advocated, and in some localities actually attempted.

The new Governor either didn't know what to do, or just didn't give a damn. The legislature, with an overwhelming majority of Mr. Landon's political faith, foregathered, and, for the most part, haunted the Executive offices and all devoted themselves to cutting the political pie and, like little Jack Horner, pulling out the plums. There was a thorough house cleaning from janitors to department heads, including clerks, stenographers, and the boys who drove the trucks and wielded the pick and shovel on the highway. Never was there a more thorough replacement of a group of state appointees and employees.



Governor Landon had "made his peace" with the old guard faction of Republicans, who had been out of control during the administrations of the progressive Governor Clyde Reed, and Democratic Governor Harry Woodring. So, now that the stand-patters were back in the saddle, they craved and demanded jobs suitable to their rank and station in life.

For purposes of publicity, a law was passed consolidating several departments, care being taken to combine **only** the departments supported by fees. No departments financed by taxation were bothered. Then to take care of the boys and girls who had recommendations from Dave Mulvane and John D. M. Hamilton, another act was passed establishing "ports of entry," like custom houses all around the state's borders, ostensibly to collect state gasoline tax.

Thurman Hill had been appointed by the Democratic Governor to a three year term as a member of the Public Service Commission, so had one more year to serve. Thurman had the old fashioned notion, that as Public Service Commissioner, he should represent the interests of the State of Kansas and its citizens, taxpayers, and utility patrons. So he started certain suits to reduce the rates. The big wigs of the utilities didn't look any bigger to Thurman than the working man, who got soaked by the three-part rate for the gas his wife used to bake his daily bread, so he incurred the displeasure of some big business interests. Both Thurman and Alf were reared in the same little city of Independence; both had attended the Kansas University. But it was suggested to Mr. Hill that his presence, in the State House, was exceedingly obnoxious to his old fellow townsman, Mr. Landon, and that, if Thurman would kindly resign and remove himself from the capitol building and preferably from

the city of Topeka, it wouldn't make Governor Landon at all angry. Thurman called attention to the law, and his three year term, declined to resign and suggested that the Governor and his errand boys go jump into the Kaw river the first time that dusty stream got high enough.

So, since Mr. Thurman Hill declined the honor of committing political hara-kari, Landon put his sleuths on Hill's back tracks, but couldn't find a thing. Thurman is one of those rarely found Kansans—a dry who does not drink. He is happily married and is rearing two fine boys, attends church, pays his bills and fears no man. But the Utility interests demanded Hill's scalp, and something had to be done, so Landon had his legislature abolish the Public Service Commission, and forthwith to pass a law, to create the Kansas Corporation Commission, with all the jurisdiction of the commission just abolished. Truly a long way around to "get" one man. But it showed the state who was running things, and served as a warning to anyone who had the temerity to oppose Landon and his new pals, the stand-patters.

Douglas Graham, one of the most competent, efficient, fire marshals who ever fought the demon of fire in anybody's state, was discarded to make room for a political pet.

Victor King, who, as Vehicle Commissioner, put that department on a paying basis, forced equality and impartiality in the distribution of automobile licenses, and accomplished the Herculean task of establishing a driver's licensing system for the state, was booted out, and a former clerk from the discredited Bank Commissioner's Office, was elevated to this office.

"Merrily, we roll along, roll along, roll along" was

the theme song. It was like a reincarnation of the French Bourbons, before the Revolution, reveling and ignoring the cries of misery and suffering on the outside.

It was not until President Roosevelt was inaugurated on March 4, 1933, and the cries of joy and thanksgiving rang out, that the royalty of the Landon regime were startled into a realization that they were "fiddling while Rome burned." The Landonites, being shown the way by President Roosevelt, made some half-hearted gestures at emulation and claimed to be cooperating with the new deal, but no progressive leadership was permitted.

Some Elijahs and Jeremiahs in the Legislature raised their voices, warning the Governor that there was sin in Israel—more particularly in the State Treasury, the Bank Commissioner's office and Attorney General's office. What was wrong? Well, Landon was told, one Ronald Finney had a monopoly on the sale of bonds to the School Fund Commission, of which the Attorney General was the managing official, and Finney's conduct was too fresh in and about the State Treasury. Well? So what? That didn't prove anything, did it? Weren't Ronald Finney and his father, W. W. Finney, old friends of the Governor? Hadn't Landon's campaign been planned across the elder Finney's dining room table? And wasn't Jesse Greenleaf, (Public Service Commissioner, who had helped Landon put the bee on Thurman Hill) a partner with Finney in the cattle business? And were not Finney and Landon figuring on starting up a packing plant at Deering, Kansas together? And had not W. W. Finney "kicked in" to Landon's campaign fund to the tune of \$6,500.00? No, don't bother Ronald Finney.

Just skip it, and mind your own business before you incur the displeasure of the powers that be.

Section 75-612 of the Revised Statutes of Kansas, 1923, reads as follows:

“The governor, secretary of state and auditor are hereby declared a board of examination, whose duty it shall be, at least once a month, without previous notice or intimation of such intended examination and inspection to make a thorough and complete examination of all the books, vouchers, accounts, records, claims, moneys, assets, and effects which are or should be in the treasury, and shall count all moneys in the treasury, and compare the books, vouchers, accounts and records; and it is hereby made the duty of the auditor to furnish said board with the necessary books, vouchers, accounts and records, in order to make such examination.”

Did Governor Alf M. Landon perform this specific duty imposed on him, by the law he swore to uphold? We shall see.

To understand subsequent events, we must take a close look at Ronald Finney and his father. The elder Finney was one of “the big people in our little town” of Emporia. Banker, owner of extensive farms and ranches, utilities magnate in a small way, he was prone to give out interviews to the papers, expressing his views and opinions on national affairs, world finance and kindred subjects. Every small town has one or more of the type. He controlled three banks directly and had connections with many more.

Ronald Finney cut his financial teeth as cashier of father’s little bank at Neosho Falls, where he was known as a conservative careful banker, who hobnobbed with the farmer patrons and, with the positive

sureness of youth, expounded on the price of hogs and the prospect of rain. No one ever hesitated to ask Ronald for a loan—because his “No” was always polite.

But Ronald became ambitious. With Roosevelt elected, he and his father thought they saw the cloud of inflation coming over the horizon and laid their bets accordingly. What they needed was capital for margin, on the Stock Market and Board of Trade.

Governor Landon was frequently seen at Emporia, the guest of the Finneys. Alf likes to associate with bankers and “big shots,” and when they can use them to advantage, such people as the Finneys do not hesitate to take full advantage of the socially ambitious. Landon’s campaign in 1932 had been planned across Mr. Finney’s table. Ronald didn’t hesitate to make use of this contact with the Governor. Ronald also ingratiated himself into the graces of Tom Boyd, State Treasurer, to the extent that young Finney had free run of the State Treasury, and its vaults, where the bonds were kept, and visited the Landon’s and Boyds as a privileged house guest. The Attorney-General, Roland Boynton, (also from Emporia, and a close relative of Wm. Allen White) was one of Finney’s Attorneys, as also was Hon. John D. M. Hamilton, man of destiny, understudy of the late lamented Dave Mulvane, and erstwhile Chairman of the Republican National Committee. Ronald’s financial operations were at first fruitful. He commuted from Topeka to Chicago by airplane. He entertained lavishly and garishly. The Landon gang missed the hot Kansas summers on Finney’s ranch in Colorado. An auburn haired stenographer in the state house, boasted that Finney was going to put her in the movies. Ronald

acquired a ranch in Greenwood County and bought a wild west circus and shipped it to Eureka for a county fair, and really showed the folks how a county fair ought to be run. It was great while it lasted.

And then HELL broke loose, and a scandal shook the state house dome!

The bucking horses and elephants didn't get out of Greenwood County until the following spring. The buffalo were pastured in a wheat field just outside of Eureka, across the Fall River bridge, and many an eastern man, driving along on U. S. Highway No. 54, stared with awe, and wondered when a tribe of Indians, on the war path, would suddenly swoop down upon him from a nearby hill.

It came about in this way: Stock market and board of trade operators can buy and sell on margin,—but they have to put up the margin. Cash is not necessary, however, as good merchantable bonds are accepted in lieu of cash. Ronald Finney was in the bond business. One of the laws passed by Landon's first legislature was an act to permit school districts, and other political sub-divisions to refund their indebtedness, and many a school board, township board and city were taking advantage of this opportunity to cut down interest by taking up  $4\frac{3}{4}\%$  bonds and reissuing them at, say,  $4\frac{7}{16}\%$ . Finney was in contact with all such transactions, apparently, and was also so nice about looking after the printing of the new bonds, and taking the heavy burden and annoying details off the members of the school board or city commissioners, and, naturally, Finney would purchase the revamped bonds.

There was another reason why Finney had a practical monopoly on such bond business. The money received by the State from sale of school lands is kept

in a so-called "School Fund," and invested in Kansas municipal securities, and controlled by the School Fund Commission, of which the Attorney General is the big shot. If a member of the municipality issuing the bonds, or a dealer other than Finney, brought the bonds to the School Fund Commission for sale, Mr. Boynton was sorry but there were no available funds just then. It soon got noised around that there were never available funds, except when Finney was handling the deal. This appears to have been known to everyone in Kansas, except Alfred M. Landon.

While Mr. Finney was acquiring his reputation as a financier, a certain Federal bank examiner, during the routine of examining the National Bank of Topeka, thought some bonds from Kansas City, Kansas, didn't "look just right." He was familiar with the genuine signature of the city official whose signature appeared on these bonds, and he decided to investigate. He kept his mouth shut, as national bank examiners are supposed to do, and reported his findings to his chief, who in turn, referred the case to the United States District Attorney. Finney was shadowed and followed and the net was drawn closer and closer. The District Attorney learned that Finney had ordered another big batch of bonds printed and saw that, to further delay prosecution, would mean another hundred thousand fake bonds turned loose on some one, so he dumped the case into the lap of Governor Landon—whose face turned as white as a clean sheet.

Finney had gone after big stakes,—millions. When the markets took a drop in August, 1933, he had to put up margin and still more margin, so he indulged in some "inflation" on his own hook. A printing house in Topeka, innocently enough, no doubt, in view

of Finney's known monopoly in marketing bonds at the State house, printed, without question, whatever bonds Finney ordered. A skillful forger fixed up these spurious bonds, and it seems that when young Finney needed some **good** bonds, he just filled his pockets with phonies, casually ambled into the State Treasury, walked into the vaults like he owned the State House, exchanged his fakes for real bonds and walked out, wise-cracking the stenographers who all thought him a real devil of a fellow.

When the scandal broke, Tom Boyd, State Treasurer, walked up and down the marbled corridors of the State House crying, wringing his hands and moaning over and over, "I trusted him like a brother, and he betrayed me."

"Shut your damned mouth," admonished State Auditor Will French, "and hire a good lawyer."

Hire a good lawyer is just what Ronald Finney did. He hired John D. M. Hamilton, et al.

When making the Cleveland nominating speech, John Hamilton, in referring to Landon, said "**His word is as good as his bond.**" Having been "of counsel" for Ronald Finney, could Hamilton have been thinking of a "Finney Bond?"

So the strong arm of the law rounded up Ronald Finney, his expert penman Caldwell, Tom Boyd and W. W. Finney. All four were convicted. Ronald and Caldwell are said to be digging coal at Lansing penitentiary. We don't hear much about poor old Tom Boyd, the "good fellow," betrayed by his pal Finney, who was also such a playmate of the Governor that the monthly inspection of the securities in the state Treasury was discontinued.



It is persistently rumored that Governor Landon took a hurried trip (a la Paul Revere) to Emporia when the U. S. District Attorney handed him the file and ordered prosecution. Personally, I can't say. I wasn't there, but Alf has passed up some excellent opportunities to deny it. If he did make that trip, it is a safe bet he did not drive the old Ford he used to campaign among the farmers.

The conviction of W. W. Finney was sustained by the Supreme Court. The officers went to his home to take him on the long trip up to the "big house." Mr. Finney asked permission to pack his traveling bag and say good-bye to his wife. The officers gladly extended this privilege to the elderly man who had stood so high in the community and had come to this. When Mr. Finney didn't reappear in about an hour, the Sheriff's men became alarmed and started to investigate. They found their man in his summer house, a discharged revolver near by. There was to be no ride to Lansing—only a slow one-way drive to the cemetery.

Kansans are heard to say that they are willing to bet that Landon will pardon Ronald Finney before the end of his second term. These anxious citizens need not worry about that. Landon will **never** pardon Finney. If it would cost Alf Landon one vote, he would not lift a finger to give Ronald Finney a drink of water, though he were rotting in solitary confinement.

When it was discovered the Kansas State Treasury was filled with "Finney Bonds," Kansans realized the state had a real pocket sized Harding scandal on its hands. One can readily realize the embarrassment (to put it mildly) of Governor Landon. In keeping with his nickname, "The Fox" made post haste for his hole and stayed there. John Hamilton, in his nomina-

tion speech said that Governor Landon knew what it was to worry. Well, I'll say he does!

The hilarity of the Landon crowd suddenly died. Anxiety took the place of cock-suredness. A carefully hand-picked investigating committee was named. The State Militia took over the Treasury. The Attorney-General was ignored. For the sake of his pal, Ronald Finney, Landon had "laid off" of the Attorney General's purchasing of bonds out of the School Fund, but nevertheless, Boynton and Landon loved each other like the Navy man loves a Marine. Fred Harris, attorney of Ottawa, loyal supporter of Landon, was chosen by the Governor as the special prosecutor for the Governor, and if ever a lawyer did a loyal, efficient and thorough job of keeping the hounds off of his chief, Harris did it. He and his assistants well earned the \$18,000.00 fee they received—out of the taxpayer's money, of course. However, in spite of Harris' efforts, the investigating committee "invited" the Governor to "visit" with them and tell them what he knew about the looting of the treasury. Governor Landon followed the advice Will French gave Tom Boyd, and "regretted." The committee being ordinary human beings, felt reticent to subpoena the governor and force him to appear before them.

Very skillfully, Harris lead the hunting pack away from the trail of the Fox. But the public was mad, and demanded a blood sacrifice. Some victim had to be the sacrificial goat. So a case was made against Attorney-General Boynton and State Auditor French. The Legislature was convened and the House brought impeachment proceedings. The gang didn't like them anyway.

And, from Landon's viewpoint, not without rea-

son. For French, who also knows a thing or two about the great sport of politics, by grapevine, had some inside information about State Treasury conditions. And Will was preparing his statement about Finney and his bonds, which statement involved Governor Landon in the scandal by showing his connections with Finney.

On that very day a story broke in the press that the Governor's daughter was in danger of being kidnapped. An ex-convict was supposed to have given Landon a tip. A cooperating organization of partisan newspapers played up the hoax and naturally attracted the sympathy of the public. The Lindbergh tragedy was still fresh in the public mind. French suppressed his statement. Pictures of the Governor's daughter were carried on the front pages.

But as the nature of the fake kidnapping became known as a publicity stunt, the Kansas citizenry became exceedingly disgusted. And when it was further discovered that the Governor tried to slip a bill for the daughter's photographs, used in the fake kidnapping stunt, past the auditor, to be paid out of taxpayer's money, said taxpayers didn't like it a bit.

The Senate tried Roland Boynton, Attorney-General, and State Auditor, Will French, on the charges filed by the House in the impeachment proceedings. William Allen White and the boys had a heck of a time saving little "Rollie," but finally, after one more demonstration of Bill White's political astuteness, Boynton was acquitted by failure to convict—by one lonesome vote.

They had nothing on Will French anyway and his alleged trial was a short comedy farce. He was fully vindicated of the charges. But they "got" Mr. French

at the next election. The whole Landon organization, including the boys in the highway department, got word to "scratch Will French," and a Democrat was elected State Auditor for the first time in the history of the state. Then, to be consistent, they filed criminal charges against the newly elected Democratic state auditor, and dragged the prosecution as long as they could. When the matter was forced to trial, by the defendant, a jury promptly acquitted him, but the strain and worry was too much for him, and he died soon after. Then Landon appointed one of his own men. It was a long way around but it worked.

The committee did develop, however, that shortly before the crash, Ronald Finney had delivered a \$10,000.00 check to the Landon home. Landon gave it out that the check was to his wife in repayment of a loan.

Well! What could the committee do? What could **anybody** do? One cannot make war on a woman, especially such an estimable and charming lady as Mrs. Landon. If the Governor of a great state, prairie or other kind, cared to resort to a dodge behind his wife's skirts,—well,—the committee did just what you or I would have done. They just **forgot** it.

I just wonder what Ronald Finney's thoughts were, as he labors and sweats in the coal mines at Lansing, when he heard of the Cleveland Convention!

Of course, all the depositors in the wrecked Emporia Bank, the Eureka Bank and Neosho Falls Bank are out whooping it up for Landon for President—I don't think.

The cost, to the people of Kansas, of the Bond Scandal will probably never be known. Forged securi-

ties of over two million dollars were found, but no one knows how many were never discovered. The impeachment proceedings cost two hundred thousand dollars (of the taxpayer's money)—with no results. The wrecked Finney banks have been able to collect enough to pay the salaries of the Receivers,—but nothing for the depositors.

Could Landon have prevented all this? Most emphatically **YES!**

First: A state bank commissioner, who is appointed by the Governor, was grossly negligent in permitting conditions to exist which gave Finney (and others) the opportunity to loot their own banks and Landon having been warned of the existing conditions did nothing, as usual.

Second: If Landon had inspected the securities in the Treasury, as the law specifically directed and required him to do, the Bond Scandal would never have happened.

Third: And most emphatically had Landon been more careful in the choice of his associates, pals and companions, the Bond Scandal would never have made scandalous history in Kansas. It is trite to quote the old adage, "A man is known by the company he keeps," but the break of the Bond Scandal clearly showed Mr. Landon's choice of company.

Just what would happen, do you think, if this man should happen to be elected President of the United States?

## VI

### THE BUDGET BALANCER?

If P. T. Barnum was right in saying that the American people love to be fooled, they have from now until next November, 1936, the opportunity of a lifetime to indulge in that luxury.

The tycoons of big business, who are boosting the Landon candidacy, are "going strong" with their ballyhoo that "Landon balanced the Kansas Budget."

It seems to me that, somewhere, I have heard it said that "figures do not lie, but that liars will figure," and that much abused "budget" is all figures. About the most boresome thing in the world (outside of John Hamilton's speech nominating Landon) is a group of statistics and figures so I will mercifully refrain from annoying the reader with long tabulations. Those who are interested can obtain them from the state records.

There was plenty of balderdash in the Cleveland convention oratory. We all expect a certain amount of it, and pay little attention to it. "Pointing with pride" and "viewing with alarm" offer a let down from serious business, like yelling at the umpire at a ball game, or singing "Sweet Adeline" at midnight while we keep the lamp post from falling over.

But, when the Hearst publications, the Liberty League, and, naturally, the old-guard Republican National Committee, and subordinate subdivisions make statements and claims, repeated, iterated and reiterated, some people can be made to believe that black is white, that water flows up hill, and that the pale shim-

merings of the waning moon are the resplendent iridescence of the noon-day sun.

A budget, as I understand it, is an orderly account of income and outgo. The budgeter lists his expenses in one column and his income in another. If the totals of both columns amount to the same figure, then the budget is said to be balanced.

For instance, consider a man whose salary is \$200.00 a month. The first contribution, of course, is the monthly payment on the car, then he settles with the grocer, butcher, milkman, filling station, and the landlord, and also makes his payments on the electric washer, the radio and electric refrigerator, and finds the total is \$196.40. So he had \$3.60 left which is absorbed by the talkies,—and his budget is balanced.

But, maybe the "Missus" bought a new pair of shoes, and just had to have a new dress, (that old "rag" was the joke of her bridge club), and little Clarence had to have his ear examined and the plumbing got stopped up and the car had to have a new tire. So Mr. X's expenses total \$250.00. The budget is not balanced. Not so good!

But Aunt Sophie sends her check for \$50.00 which makes up the difference,—and the budget is balanced. Simple isn't it,—and wouldn't Mr. X feel silly running for President of the United States or for township trustee, on a claim that he balanced his budget?

Well, that's Alf Landon. Instead of Aunt Sophie, Uncle Sam sent into Kansas, for relief and for highway construction and other public works, \$58,105,980.00 between March 1, 1933 and December 15, 1935—and that's a LOT of money even if you say it real fast. With the Roosevelt administration spending, in Kansas, over twenty-eight and one-half millions of dollars

for highway work alone, that otherwise would have to come out of the state budget, no wonder Kansas can balance its budget—if it is in fact balanced. You know what certain people can do with figures.

That's all there is to it, folks. That's the answer to the "budget balancing" nonsense, played up on the platform and in the Hearst papers and magazines. So why take up time or space even worrying about it? It's not important enough to dignify with an argument.

Balanced his budget! Bah! Why, by July 1, 1934, one and one-fourth millions of dollars of general fund warrants had to be bought by the State School Fund Commission to enable the Landon administration to pay its bills. In order to pay interest due July 1st, 1934, the State School Fund Commission was compelled to buy some \$300,000.00 in Soldier's Bonus Bonds.

Indisputable statistics show that of the money expended in Kansas for relief, the Federal government furnished 70.28%, the cities, counties and local governments 29.43%—total 99.71%.

The Landon State Administration (folks, get this) spent **29/100 of 1%**. Think of it! As Federal Administrator Harry Hopkins well said: "If Governor Landon has balanced the Kansas budget, he did it by taking it out of the hides of the Kansas working people." And with the expenditure of 29/100 of 1%, Landon, through John Stutz, so manipulated the relief situation as to greatly strengthen his political machine.

A great budget balancer is Governor Landon. Balancing and juggling are very similar physical feats and maybe Landon and his crew got the words mixed.

But Landon's publicity agents are making a great to do, **claiming** Governor Landon balanced the Kan-



sas budget.

Well! **So what?** So did the Governor of Iowa balance the Iowa budget; so did Nebraska and Colorado and other mid-western states.

If one is looking for a REAL budget balancer, consider Governor E. W. Marland of Oklahoma, who not only balanced the budget of his state, but paid off a \$3,000,000.00 indebtedness and reduced the interest on \$10,000,000.00 from 6% to 2.28%; and this, without using the state's revenue from oil royalty on state owned land.

For the Landon crowd to harp about the budget is as silly as to loudly claim that their candidate pays his employees working in his oil fields.

## VII

### RELIEF

The writer of these lines is no advocate of any particular theory or philosophy on the troublesome question of charity or, as it is now called, "relief." Personally, I wish there were no occasion for the problem to arise. In the days of expansion of our nation, as the white tide crept westward from the Atlantic seaboard, and we chased the land owners, the Indians, off their own domain and took it for ourselves, there was plenty of work for every able-bodied man and woman. In those days a man or woman who **wouldn't** work deserved to starve.

But our expansion, within our own borders, is over. As a nation we have reached majority and full size. Formerly, if a man lost his job in the locality where he was, he went to a new location for a fresh start. But he can't do that any more. Wherever he goes, he meets the same conditions.

Regardless of who pays the bill, I do not like "relief." The question, of whether the unfortunate are provided with a scanty living, by a city or township, or by a county unit, or by the State, or by the Federal Government, or by the Salvation Army or Community Chest, is simply one of method, about which conscientious men and women will honestly differ. I say I don't like "relief"—nor do I like castor oil nor appendicitis operations. But if the oil or the knife is really necessary for my welfare, I will go ahead and take them.

And, for one, I will not, when I recover, curse and abuse the physician who prescribed the oil or performed the operation.

Admitting that the relief measures are occasionally taken advantage of, it must be admitted by everyone, even though prejudiced as I am on the subject, that the orderly, systematic and impartial distribution of relief under the Federal Administration is far more satisfactory than a hotch-potch, irresponsible, unreliable heterogeneous handling of the relief problem by local units.

It seems to me that years ago, when I was a boy and under parental pressure, I attended Sunday School, I heard quoted, "The poor ye have with you always," and in my sub-conscious mind there is a remembrance of a certain rich man being directed to sell his goods and give to the poor.

Evidently the question of relief is not exactly new.

Of course, there are several different ways of solving the problem of the poor. One way would be to let them starve. When I hear politicians elocuting and ringing the welkin with their worry about high taxes, and sympathizing with the poor downtrodden rich, I wonder if they think the starvation plan is the solution of relief. As I said before, a man who will not work when he can deserves to go hungry. But I say just as loudly that when a capable man **wants** to work, and hunts for work, and prays and begs for a chance to work, and is laughed at because the employer has a long waiting list, surely **that** man should be helped by the society of which he is a part. I cannot subscribe to the "let 'em starve" theory. Maybe I am just too highly emotional.

Candidate Landon says to turn the question of relief over to the States to handle. We ask, "Why?" Can a state, typical prairie or otherwise, raise relief money any more painlessly or expeditiously than the Federal Government? And how would it benefit the

man some politicians are so concerned about just now, the "taxpayer?" When you hear a professional politician, (who is by nature, a tax-eater) wringing his hands and shedding bitter tears over the plight of the taxpayer, don't get overly alarmed. The only tax matter that is worrying him is that **he**, himself, is not the one who is collecting and spending the tax money. And that goes for any and all political parties. It sounds too much like Alf Landon's statements on enforcing the liquor laws.

But to resume. Unless honest, working people are able to find employment, the taxpayer is going to be called on for contributions, and he doesn't particularly care who passes the hat. So I can't see what difference it makes.

However, a state is very apt to pass the hot poker on down to the counties, and then what about your taxpayer? Assuming that the Boards of County Commissioners are honest and conscientious (and a few of them are, believe it or not) they would be forced to raise the assessment, the valuation and the rate of local tax on every farm, every home, every stock of merchandise, every automobile—in fact, every item of property in the counties. Having his tax bill doubled would surely help relieve the farmer—yes relieve him of **all** his property. Forcing the burdens of relief upon tangible property would permit the intangibles to escape. So, it looks as if it is the people with large incomes but nothing the county tax assessor can find, who are raising all this rumpus about the national government handling relief as a national problem.

Then too, very few counties are organized or have the capital to go into extensive public works construction, hence relief handled by counties would necessarily be limited to the dole—and any thinking person

knows that the dole ruins any person who receives it, breeds indolence, loss of self respect, and strikes directly at the roots of our social system.

Them's my sentiments. Anyway, men a lot smarter than I can ever hope to be decided to handle wide-spread national unemployment as a national problem. Instead of a hand-out to a workman, he was offered a job. He was given a chance to earn what he got, and to be able to hold up his head among his fellowmen, as an honest working man, and not as a beggar or loafer. And the communities have something to show for it.

I admit the job isn't anything to write home about—or cause a man employed in private industry to quit his job and go to work for the government. The average unskilled laborer gets from \$32.00 to \$40.00 a month. Skilled time keepers get from \$44.00 to \$65.00. Some few foremen on large projects, who would be worth \$200.00 to \$300.00 to private contractors, get \$100.00 a month.

Not one of these men would stay on public works if they could find as good or a better job in private industry.

President Roosevelt took every precaution to keep relief out of politics. To direct this tremendous task, he called in Harry Hopkins who had years of experience in relief and charity work; who was neither Democrat nor Republican, but who, for years, solicited funds from both, without partiality. Feeling that each state knew its local problems best, he turned over the details of administering the unemployment program to the Governors of those states, without regard to politics.

One sometimes hears it said that President Roosevelt has made some mistakes. He surely did pull a prize "boner" when he turned the federal relief funds

over to Governor Landon of Kansas.

For, through John Stutz, state director of relief, the relief funds were not only misused and abused, but Landon was building up a formidable political machine, comparable only with the Black Shirts of Italy and the Nazis of Germany.

Stutz had already a personal organization known as The League of Municipalities, so in the set-up of local relief committees, Stutz got good Landon men in control. Practically every County Poor Commissioner was Stutz's choice because, while the County Commissioners did the appointing, Stutz had the final veto power. Certain qualifications were made necessary for case workers, such as a college education and credits in Social Service, but these could be waived—and were waived, if the applicant was “right” politically. No Democrat or Progressive Republican could meet the qualifications. The certifying officers, auditors, and field men were practically 100% Landon Republicans.

Once a Democrat from Coffey County was discovered on the payroll as a certifying officer. He was asked how come? He told them he got the appointment through recommendation of State Senator So-and-So. The worthy Senator was called on the carpet and required to explain how a ————— Democrat got on, and why a Republican State Senator would do such a thing. A Senator, even a State Senator, doesn't appreciate being talked to like a motorist being bawled out by a Kansas highway patrolman, and informed Stutz that the man he recommended was his nephew, and a damned capable man, with a wife and two kids and out of a job. And what were they going to do about it? The young man stayed, breaking the record of a 100% Republican personnel.

This force of executives did everything in their

power to unpopularize President Roosevelt and his administration. In such a huge set up, as the national re-employment program, covering 48 states, besides the territories, certain rules and regulations are indispensable and, human nature being what it is, sometimes minor errors would occur. That just couldn't be helped. And whenever some time keeper made an error this gang of ingrates lectured the workmen on the inefficiency of national relief, leaving the veiled impression that President Roosevelt, in person, had done it on purpose.

A lot of loyal Democrats and Progressive Republicans expressed their disapproval in language that required no illustrations, and they were invited, by Landon and Stutz, to buy a one way ticket to that well known place where the climate is exceedingly hot. Kansas Senators and Congressmen were bombarded with everything from tearful appeals to threats of mayhem.

Under the circumstances, one would suppose that unemployed working men would have been grateful for the chance to work four days a week, even if the pay was not provided on a boom basis. And in most cases they were. Human nature is just human nature, and probably isn't much to brag about at that. And, American working men will take about so much abuse—and then they are going to do something about it, and stop talking about it.

The Landon Poor Commissioner in Sedgwick County, Kansas, which includes Wichita, a thriving prairie city, which boasts 120,000 population, was one B. E. George. This worthy so mishandled his duties, showed such rank partiality and discrimination, conducted himself so nearly like a 90-day lieutenant driving a company of veteran soldiers, that the men finally

rebelled. Going on a strike on a relief job sounds silly—to anyone not knowing the facts. But the descendants of the men who fought at Valley Forge, and many of the men who, themselves, faced machine gun fire, poison gas, mud and corned beef at Chateau-Thierry and Belleau Wood, were not going on, indefinitely “taking it,” from a parvenu, just because he had Governor Landon behind him, backing him up.

These disgusted men called a strike. Governor Landon, the friend of labor, called out the militia.

So far as Alfred M. Landon was concerned the workmen could take the abuse of George and like it, or they could get themselves shot. The expectant faces of little children with their noses pressed against the window pane, anxiously waiting for daddy to come home to supper, could just wait and wait, for daddy wouldn't be home. He could be lying in the street, writhing in pain and wallowing in his own blood, with a militia-man's bullet through his body—so far as Governor Landon cared. Fortunately, the National Administration heard of the mess and post haste, sent a representative out to Wichita to find out what the devil was going on anyway.

Results were quickly obtained. George was booted out bodily, a decent Poor Commissioner was put in charge, the men went to work, and there has been no trouble since.

“And what became of B. E. George?” you ask. Oh, Alf took care of him, by putting him in charge of a C. C. C. Camp up at Eskridge in Wabaunsee County, where the boys are under a modified form of military discipline.

Finally, when there was such an uproar, Federal Administrator Harry Hopkins decided there must be some fire to produce so much smoke, so he sent a bright



fellow named Bounds to investigate. Mr. Bounds spent quite a while in Kansas, going from one town and community to another, interviewing witnesses, gathering signed statements and affidavits, asking questions—but not answering any. His detail was to gather information, not to put out any.

But it wasn't very long after Mr. Bounds completed his research, and returned to Washington, that the Works Progress Administration was organized, and took over the administration of relief labor in Kansas. The program was put under the direction of Evan Griffith, of Manhattan, Kansas, and the reign of terror of the Landon-Stutz regime was over at last. Mr. Griffith is conducting this huge undertaking as President Roosevelt intended, on a non-partisan basis, and with a minimum of unfavorable comment. Mr. Griffith works nearly as hard as Mr. Roosevelt himself—15 to 16 hours a day, has the respect of the state and cooperation of the personnel, from his first assistant to the man with the shovel.

The highway program financed by the federal government is still under Landon's control. Through his Highway Director, Harry Darby (a man almost on a par with John Stutz) strict partisanship is practiced. None but loyal, active supporters of Landon are permitted on the payroll, financed by the Roosevelt Administration.

When you tourists who pass through Kansas break your car springs driving over some of Landon and Darby's detours, don't blame the President, even though you see a "Federal Project" sign by the side of the road. Jump on Landon about it.

Without doubt, Franklin D. Roosevelt is one of the greatest leaders America has developed. But as a politician, he lacks the proclivities of a fox.

## VIII

### FOX AND THE FARMER

“Governor Landon knows what agriculture means. His business has been with farmers.”

Quoted from John D. M. Hamilton’s speech nominating Landon.

Doubtless, John was trying to leave the impression that his candidate was friendly to the farmers, and still not say so **too emphatically** on which statement he would be called.

Alf M. Landon’s business with farmers has been like a wolf’s business with a flock of sheep—or a fox’s business with a poultry yard. Alf’s vocation is politics and his avocation is oil. To produce oil, a driller has to have land, and most of the land being owned by farmers (together with the mortgage companies) quite naturally an oil man must try to get along with farmers, in the oil producing territories—at least until he gets a good, valid and binding oil lease executed.

As for Alfred Mossman Landon, right there his interest in the farmer ceases.

The oil fraternity is composed of a good bunch of fellows, for the most part. These men make quick deals, and the higher type of oil producers are men of their word. Thousands of dollars are risked upon the word of one oil man to another, over the telephone—without the scratch of a pen. But over in Montgomery County and Greenwood County, if you mention to an experienced oil man that you have a deal on with Alf Landon, he will advise you, “Get it in writing.”

At Eureka, Kansas, lives a young man, of one of the first families—strongly Republican since the time of Lincoln. He was well and favorably known to land-owners of Greenwood County, and got into the oil leasing business. By making his word good and treating everyone fairly, he was quite successful in a small way.

A test well was started on a farm close to one upon which this young man held a lease. Alf wanted his lease if the test proved good. He made a fair and square deal to purchase this lease, but demanded an Abstract of Title. An Abstract of Title was made and submitted to Landon, who stalled along under the pretext of having the title examined, and delayed the deal until the test well was completed. It was not a paying producer, so Alf declined to complete the deal. This young man NOW will advise you to “put it in writing” when dealing with Landon.

When the young man in question didn't register such wild enthusiasm about Landon as an oil man, or as a Governor, the local Landonites gave out the story that he was sore about not receiving a political appointment. This man never was an applicant for any political job and wouldn't accept one if offered.

Truly, this is a small matter, but Alf M. Landon does things in a small way, as befits small men.

As for actual farm experience, Landon probably doesn't know milo maize from alfalfa. He would probably not know the headstall from the crupper, and would in all probability be like the town girl who upon seeing, for the first time, a litter of pigs exclaimed, “Oh! See the old hog and flock of little kittens.”

But, you might say that a man does not necessarily have to know all the technicalities of running a wheat combine, or be able to drive six horses, in order to main-

tain a sympathetic understanding of the farmer's economic problems. That is quite true. I know a good omelet when I eat one, but I couldn't lay an egg to save my life.

But at a critical time, did Landon, as governor, do anything for the farmers of his state? If he did, I would like to know when. At the time of his inauguration, farmers by the thousands were losing their homes through foreclosure. Members of the legislature begged and implored Governor Landon to use his power with the legislature to pass a law modifying the redemption period in foreclosure sales.

After a campaign, in which Landon led farmers to believe he was a veritable Moses, come to lead them out of the wilderness, and solve their problems, he was too busy distributing patronage to bother about the plight of the farmers. The farmer, like the W. C. T. U., couldn't help nor hurt him since the election was over and he was inaugurated—so!

State Senator Wm. Schoen of Smith County, a progressive Republican, and other farm leaders, earnestly pleaded and implored Governor Landon to get a mortgage moratorium law passed. The Governor bluntly and curtly refused. If the farmer couldn't pay off his mortgage, he ought to lose his farm—served him right for being poor. So the regular 1933 session of the legislature adjourned, sine die, with not one remedial act passed on behalf of the agricultural interests.

Then the State of Minnesota passed a mortgage moratorium law and its constitutionality was upheld. The public demand for such a law in Kansas became a clamorous roar, which could not be ignored, so Governor Landon was forced, against his will, to call a

special session of the legislature to pass a mortgage moratorium law. This special session cost the taxpayers \$12,000.00, besides the inconvenience to the legislators. Then Landon, in rural communities, took all the credit for this law. He didn't say anything about it in the cities.

After the usual delays, the Supreme Court of Kansas got around to it, and hit the moratorium law in the head with an ax. Then Landon said he never had been for the law, anyway.

The invalidating of the moratorium law, by the Kansas Supreme Court, did no damage as the purposes of the Act were already accomplished, by giving the farmers a breathing spell and, giving the national administration time to organize the Farm Credit Administration and provide working capital for the Federal Land Banks, so the farmers could arrange their credit in an orderly way. In 1933 the Federal Land Banks were literally swamped with applications for loans from farmers to save their homes. These organizations met the situation. Help was hired, all that could be utilized and worked two shifts—day and night. Then, when the mortgage companies and insurance companies woke up from their nightmare and decided the country, after all, was not going on the rocks as long as President Roosevelt was at the helm of the ship of state, they began to renew and refinance the mortgages they held, and foreclosures and evictions were reduced to somewhere near a normal basis. The farmer doesn't need the moratorium, now that he is getting a fair price for his products and his finances are in order. Not because of Governor Landon but in spite of him.

What would the farmers of America have done

without Roosevelt? What would Landon have done in Roosevelt's place? I shudder to think of it.

Landon does not believe in Federal financing of the farmer, nor in the principals of the A.A.A. and although he claimed, in his 1934 campaign for re-election, to believe in, and to be cooperating with, the New Deal, he was doing everything he could, under cover, to undermine the whole federal set-up, whether it was loans, corn-hog program, or wheat allotment. He advocates turning the relief problems to the States, which means an enormous increase in the farmer's taxes, whether funds are furnished by the state or by the county units. Farmers are boresome to Landon, unless a particular farmer has a farm upon which there is a strong prospect of oil, and when he has his lease he is through with him, too.

Why should any farmer, of all people, consider voting for Landon for anything?

## IX

### HIP! HIP! HOORAY!

Kansas has no State Police. For years the Kansas Chamber of Commerce and industrial associations have tried to secure the enactment of a law to create a State Police organization, but the allegedly horny-handed sons of the soil didn't see any use in it, and objected to the expense. Organized labor was positively hostile to the idea.

But as experienced politicians know, there are other ways to kill a cat than choking him on hot creamery butter. Kansas having finally gotten around to the building of some highways, it was suggested that there should be a few men, assigned to patrol the highways, to prevent reckless driving, and to educate motorists to keep their tail lights bright and shining, not park on the slab and do their necking on side roads. So a measure was slipped through to create a State Patrol, to be a branch of the state highway department. Not a bad idea, as it was explained—and, as it may have been intended at its inception.

The Attorney-General's office has an assistant who is, ex-officio, attorney for the highway department and, as such, he is supposed to be the legal advisor of the state patrol.

Under the rule of the Landonites, Kansans have decided it would be better to have a decent state police force in preference to the mongrel, cross-bred, meretricious, so-called highway patrol. For, if ever the functions of an arm of a state government were prostituted, it is by this crew of uniformed, gun-toting, overbear-

ing, officious and vicious gang of errand boys of Governor Landon. Very little are the members of the highway patrol concerned with traffic problems. The organization is operated for two purposes; i. e., to provide an elastic item of patronage, and, more importantly, to enforce disciplinary measures on communities and individuals that fail to roll up the desired majorities for the Landonites.

Sedgwick County, and Wichita, have used the bad judgment in the past couple of elections to give Alfred M. Landon a very discouraging minority of their votes, in spite of a very friendly attitude of one newspaper, and a downright personal partisan ballyhoo build-up by the other.

So, while the cities of Topeka, Kansas City, Kansas, Hutchinson and other cities were permitted to ignore the state's prohibitory liquor laws, the Landon forces proceeded to fulfill Landon's pledge to enforce prohibition, by confining their efforts to Wichita and Sedgwick County.

The City of Wichita, by reason of its location, transportation facilities and adequate hotel accommodations, is the leading convention city of the state. (For modesty, I will confine my bragging about my home town to the state.) But Wichita was soon to learn to expect raids whenever it was announced that a convention of any kind was to be held in the city. It made no difference whether it was a gathering of razor blade salesmen or a religious conclave. Several months ago a raid was staged on the eve of a Sunday School convention. Evidently the highway patrol didn't trust that group. However, this raid was looked upon with more or less tolerance. The papers carried headlines about it to greet the convention as it assembled, and



the Governor and Attorney-General showed the boys and girls how the devil's tail was being twisted and how righteousness was triumphant. Wichita was dried up, so the town boys had to drive clear over to the next county seat to get their liquor—for a few days. But that was all right. A politician in Kansas **must** keep the dry forces in an amiable mood, and this raid caused the convention to all join in on that popular song:

“I bet you tell that to all the girls, but it sure sounds good to me.”

While Wichita was getting tired of being the goat all the time, by becoming known as a **hot spot**, the city forgave the patrol and with an “Oh! Well” attitude, proceeded about its business.

But the time came when enough was sufficient. Early in the merry month of May, 1936, the Kansas State Bar Association called a state convention at Wichita. For the same period, the Nobles of the Order of the Mystic Shrine, decided it was high time to foregather for the good of the order and such other business as might properly come up for action. For the benefit of any reader who doesn't know, the Shrine is known as the playground of Masonry. To be initiated into the mysteries of the Shrine, one (so I am told) must be a Mason high up in the degrees, and the Shrine counts among its membership some of the greatest living men. According to Landon and his Attorney-General, they should not have picked Wichita for their convention, in spite of the beautiful Midian Temple and the first-class hotel accommodations.

So the highway patrol swooped down on the liquor dealers, the night before these two conventions assembled, and proceeded to apply the sponge and blotter with a vengeance. Visiting lawyers and Shriners could

go with their tongues hanging out, or bring their own liquor. Now if the Attorneys and the Masons had picked a convention city which voted "right," they would not have been disturbed. Who ever heard of a wholesale liquor raid at Topeka or Kansas City, Kansas?

Perhaps the reader will say that if the liquor men were violating the law they should be raided. But listen! Let me picture to you a typical raid as it is staged by the Landon highway patrol.

Let's go out to the "Casa Caliente" for the evening's entertainment. We drive out and park our car in one of the long lines of cars. A watchman moving among the cars, to prevent theft, looks us over, decides we are all right, greets us cordially, and we enter the resort. A fair orchestra at the far end is hitting up swing music, and the saxophone wails and the trombone tears out the bone. A few well dressed couples are dancing. Around the tables are seated well respected and orderly people, a bit conversational and merry perhaps, but in no sense rough.

Trying to imitate what they have seen in New York or the movies, a master of ceremonies steps out and announces that little Carrie Wallop will entertain us with her interpretation of that popular ballad entitled; "And let me Wah-Hoo, Wah-Hoo, Wah-H-O-O-O-O." Carrie looks like she is worried about her youngest daughter off at boarding school, but her voice isn't so bad for out here on the prairies. We are escorted to a table and order beer or ale.

And, gentle reader, if anyone tells you that the brew sold all over Kansas, unlicensed and untaxed by the state, is devoid of authority and horse power, just try it.

Then things happen. The doors are flung open and a band of Cossacks, with 45 Colts hanging on their Sam Brown belts, rush in, screaming like panthers, yelling like all the boys from the X Bar X Ranch after pay day, swinging axes, smashing mirrors and glass-ware. They seem to have a special liking for smashing glass. They attack the bar, tables, chairs, and about everything made of wood, beer kegs, the flooring, anything. The Neon beer sign is playfully demolished. Then, dirtiest of the dirty tricks, they even smash and chop up the toilets. They don't find any hard liquor.

Their leader, a man who would do better to hire out his face to haunt houses, steps out in the middle of the floor, and informs those there assembled that if anyone wants to know who is responsible for this raid, that he himself is, and what is anybody going to do about it.

We are not going to do anything about it. We had parked our guns at the door. We didn't come out to fight. But we make up our minds to vote for Landon and his Attorney-General and highway patrol. We want to see Mr. Landon in a position of real authority, with this sweet tempered, shrinking violet, axe-swinging assistant Attorney-General, in charge of the Department of Justice. His talents are wasted here with the little puny Highway Patrol of Kansas. It is our opinion that Harry Dougherty of the Harding Administration will be considered a rank tyro and piker if this Kansas gang ever gets control of the Department of Justice, and the O. G. P. U. of Russia will be sending their brightest young men to America to learn how a dictator's decrees **really** should be executed.

That's our answer to the challenge of the leader of Landon's highway patrol, who looks to us like a character just stepped out of the Popeye comic strip. On

the streets of Wichita, it is said he brags: "I'll show this \_\_\_\_\_ town how to go Democratic." Nice boy!

As might be expected, news of such punitive measures on a dis-favored community began to get national publicity, and then the Attorney-General (little Clarence) made the statement that these fierce, relentless, ruthless and unlawful attacks upon and destruction of property were on his own responsibility, and that Landon was not to blame. And Kansans yawn: "Oh, Yeah?"

Meanwhile, as you tour through Kansas, be careful! Unlawful bright lights, no tail lights, passing on hills, overloaded trucks and 80 to 90 mile driving on the wrong side of the road are to be met with. The highway patrol is too busy, otherwise, to bother about the highways.

## X

### A MILITARY RECORD

This chapter is, of necessity, very short.

“In common with millions of us he was a member of the armed forces of the United States.”

This is quoted from Hamilton’s speech nominating Landon at the Cleveland convention.

His standing with ex-service men is indicated from the following excerpt from a letter, circulated among the veterans, dated October 26, 1934:

“With the ‘cooties’ running all over the state treasury since Finney left the door open, it’s going to take a real Vet and not Landon, the 42-day service ‘officer’ to scratch them out. It’s going to be taps for this stay-at-home officer who slept on guard duty—”

As Mickey Mouse in the movies says, “That’s all, folks.”

## XI

### BANKS AND BANKERS

It must not be thought, because I mention banks and Alf M. Landon in the same phrase, that I have any animosity toward banks, as such. On numerous occasions I have found banks' services highly desirable, if not indispensable. I have many personal friends in the banking business. Most bankers I have known have been gentlemen in every sense. Like all of us, a banker is not wholly devoid of an enlightened self-interest. He is in business to make money, the same as a barber, a farmer or one in any other activity, except the lawyer who, of course, practices law for the fun of the thing.

Under our existing social order, it would be exceedingly inconvenient to try to get along without banks. We found that out toward the end of February and early March, A.D., 1933. It is with reference to the system of operating banks that I wish to direct your attention.

It has often seemed to me that the banking business was sort of one-sided. If I were temporarily out of funds and applied to my banker for a loan, I was required to leave my watch, give a chattel mortgage on the old car, and get my note signed by two sureties, and the interest was taken out of the loan in advance.

But, if I happened to find myself in possession of more funds than I cared to carry about in my wallet, for cigars and lunch money, and I proposed to lend that money to the bank on a demand loan, that is, subject to my check, did the banker offer me any security? Huh! Why the idea was an insult to his institution.

For goodness sake, this was a **BANK**. Its reputation was sufficient security. (I thought **my** reputation was sufficient, too, but there was nothing to be gained by arguing.) So, into the hands of a banker, and without any security, I turned my surplus funds. I knew the bank was capitalized for \$100,000.00 and that it had deposits (so-called) of over \$750,000.00. But being afraid of fire and burglars I would deposit my cash, to my credit, in the bank and just hope and pray that the owners of that \$750,000.00 wouldn't **all** call for their money at the same time.

I have given the question of bank deposits (and at times lack of them) considerable thought and, reason as I may, I am always like old Omar Khayyam, "I come out the door wherein I went," being still unable to see why the sauce for the goose should not be the sauce for the roast duck.

In February and March, 1933, the question ceased to be academic. It was vitally practical and concrete. Banks found out how some of their debtors felt who **COULD NOT** meet their obligations.

And why not? The answer was the same as the Banks had often listened to from defaulting note signers. They did **NOT** have the money. Why? Simply because all the owners of that \$750,000.00 demanded their money at one time. Of course, the bank did not have \$750,000.00 in deposits, lying around the vault or cash drawer in neatly wrapped bundles of 10's and 20's. Except for a certain legal reserve of cash to use in paying a normal amount of demands (or checks), that \$750,000.00 had been loaned to borrowers and was to be found in the note case.

If I had \$1000.00 deposited to my credit in my bank for which I had no immediate need, why should I draw it out? Only one answer! **Fear!** Fear that some-

thing would happen to prevent the bank paying me my money according to our contract, that is on demand. Just the same as the colored man who deposited his money in a bank and next day asked to draw it out. The teller asked him if he was going to make an investment. Rastus said, "No." The teller pressed him for his reason, and finally the darky answered:

"I's been watching that cashier man, and I sees he keeps wearin' his hat all the time."

So Rastus, fearful that the cashier wore his hat in readiness for sudden departure, withdrew his deposit and closed his account.

Thousands of people in the winter of 1932-1933 were just like that colored brother. They got scared. They did not know what they were afraid of. The danger of robbery was greater than normal, yet people withdrew their bank deposits and dared the fire and robbery hazard.

Our financial structure crumbled. What I had feared came to pass. All of the people owning the \$750,000.00 demanded their money, simultaneously, and with the funds in notes, many of them not due, and still more of them uncollectible, because of the long drawn depression through those "Three Long Years"—1930, 1931 and 1932, the demands became riots. There being no action taken by the then national administration, Governors began to order banks in their states closed, and no one could get any money out of them.

There is no need to reiterate how President Roosevelt made it unanimous and gave all the banks a holiday. He had no legal authority for doing so, if one is a stickler for technicalities. But his actions were lauded and praised by bankers and laborers alike. Just as soon as Congress could hang up its hat and get to its seat, laws were passed ratifying and con-



firming the President's assumed authority, and the country as one man yelled, "Hurrah!" and "Bravo!"

That took care of that one situation, but why let it happen again? If the public just knew that their deposits would be safe, they would leave the money in the banks. If rumors were circulated that a bank was in failing circumstances, the depositor would not be alarmed and charge down to that bank to beat his neighbor to it. Runs on banks would be avoided.

So the Roosevelt administration enacted into law the plan to insure bank deposits. If the idea is wrong, then the very basis of all insurance is wrong. Under the operation of this law the depositor feels like he has some "security" for his loan. If I deposit my spare cash in the bank, Uncle Sam endorses the bankers' note to me. Now, what is wrong?—what is oppressive?—what is unjust in that?—I ask you.

Alfred M. Landon, as Governor of Kansas, had an answer to my questions. He gave his answer at a meeting of the American Bankers' Association in Chicago on September 6, 1933, as follows:

"In my judgment, the guaranty of bank deposits, if carried out in this country to its logical conclusion, will completely destroy the entire banking system of the nation. There is no question in my mind but that the guaranty of bank deposits is a greater blow to the ultimate welfare of the American people than the WILDEST inflation of the currency could be.

"The responsibility of deciding what shall be done if the tragedy of bank guaranty should actually be re-enacted on a national scale, lies, thank God, with you and not with me.

"Talk about guaranteeing bank deposits

is but political salve to a wound that needs a business caustic."

In plain words, the man who accidentally became Governor of Kansas, says that if bankers are required to take reasonable precautions, to protect the money entrusted to them without security, it "will completely destroy the entire banking system of the nation!" We Kansans are unable to follow his logic, if any. We are unable to understand the line of reasoning of a man, who could sit idly by, neglecting his lawful duty, while the state treasury was looted, then go to Chicago and make such preposterous statements about applying a "business caustic" to the depositors in the banks of his pals, the Finneys. Those depositors thought they had been burnt sufficiently by total loss of their funds.

Yet it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good. Although several hundred farmers, working people and local merchants lost their "all" when Finney's Eureka Bank failed, still it has provided steady employment for the Receiver, the cashier of another busted bank at Madison, and for several years the Chairman of the Republican County Committee.

I mention Mr. Landon's record and public utterances with regard to banks so the voters of America may know what to expect. If you crave repeal of the Federal bank deposit insurance plan, you should vote for Landon. The present Governor of Kansas is usually very reticent about taking any definite stand on any controversial topic. But he was so bitter against bank deposit insurance, and was so carried away by the privilege of associating with "big shot" bankers, that he threw away his usual fox-like caution and said:

"There is no question in my mind but that the guaranty of bank deposits is a **greater**

**blow to the ultimate welfare of the American people** than the wildest inflation of the currency could be.”

Will Candidate Landon please construe his statement, and tell the voters WHY he is so worried about the guaranteeing of bank deposits? No! He will not!

And to further attract the favor of the big international bankers, the Landon boys stage a theatrical exhibition, by John D. M. Hamilton reading a purported telegram from Governor Landon to the Cleveland convention, stating what are supposed to be Landon's views on money and finance. The pretended telegram in part said:

“The convention advocates ‘a sound currency to be preserved at all hazards.’ I agree that ‘the first requisite to a sound and stable currency is a balanced budget.’ The second requisite, as I view it, is a currency expressed in terms of gold and convertible into gold.”

We imagine Mr. Landon intended this language to be understood as meaning he favored a repeal of the present administration's action on the devaluation of gold. He says that a requisite is a currency based on gold and **convertible into gold**.

In taking this stand he is going clear beyond the platform of his party. The platform adopted by the convention says:

“We oppose **further** devaluation of the dollar.”

In effect the Republican party, in convention assembled, said:

“We have no criticism of the present administration's adjustment of prices, by its policy with reference to gold, but we don't want to go any further.”

Well, why expound the obvious? President Roosevelt has stubbornly opposed any attempt to further devalue the dollar, even against the powerful inflationist block. But Landon proposes going all the way back. The old high price of gold means the same old low price on consumable goods, the same old low wages and the same old strangle hold on the nation, by a few international banking houses.

And when President Roosevelt had successfully worked out the financial debacle and reopened the banks that were sufficiently sound, and the question was before Congress of adopting laws to prevent another financial panic, Mr. Landon felt called on to air his views as a financial expert. He wired Congress, and his telegram was inserted in the Congressional Record. He vehemently opposed the passage of any law looking to the guaranteeing of bank deposits.

All I can say is that the Federal Deposit Insurance plan **WORKS**. Bank failures, under the plan, are now so rare as to be front page news. Not on account of Mr. Landon but in spite of him.

Parable: Once upon a time, there was a business man who had been prosperous and successful, but due to circumstances beyond his control, he found his business in bad financial condition. He called his financial backers into a conference and asked their advice. Should he go into bankruptcy, or try to carry on, rebuild his plant, and try to "come back"?

His bankers said to him, "We have checked up on you, and your property. We have carefully considered you, personally, as a moral and credit risk. Your credit is good with us for \$57,000.00. We will back you to that amount."

So the man started to rebuild his business. He

improved his plant and repaired his machinery and was replenishing his stocks of materials. The prospects for a new success grew constantly brighter, and his improvements and betterments were about completed.

Then, as his indebtedness to the banks reached the point of using about half of the amount of credit they promised him, the bankers began to welsh. They complained and whined that he was spending too much money, and that his children would have to pay it. They wanted to put a man of their choosing in charge of the business. But the Board of Directors had approved the credit and the manner in which the money had been spent. Even though the bank's officers howled their heads off, the directors stood by the business man and permitted him to complete the job he set out to do.

Now, if you make a few small changes in this parable, you have the answer to the complaint of which you now hear so much. Change the business man to President Roosevelt, leave the bankers as they are, substitute Alf M. Landon for the bankers' choice, the board of directors for the American people and you have it, (as Amos 'n Andy say) in two nut-shells.

President Roosevelt called a conference of the men who control the commodity—money. They told him a debt of fifty-seven billion would not seriously handicap this nation. Taking them at their word, he set about repairing the wreck caused by former governmental, sociological and commercial blunders. When the debt reached less than half of the sum, named by the bankers, they started scolding and welshing. They had no specific complaint against any specific detail of the way he was spending. They simply said he was spending too much. And they said it loudly and often. They are still saying it. They want to take the country

over, and put Alf M. Landon in charge to run it for them, under their direct supervision and control.

But the Board of Directors—the American people—the stockholders, if you please, are going to decide that. Some of them, myself included, are not altogether satisfied with some of the details of the present modus operandi of reconstruction, but, as for me, I am most unalterably opposed to the bankers putting Alf M. Landon in charge.

As an elderly, philosophical securities dealer said the other day:

“These bankers are making a mistake fighting Roosevelt. It looks like they would learn a little sense. They remind me of an old cow bogged down in the mud. You know, out here on the prairies in an early day, a cow brute would occasionally blunder into a mud hole and get bogged down to where she couldn’t help herself. She would surely drown or starve if we didn’t get her out. So, we would get a rope or two and throw a loop around her horns and tug and pull and push and finally get the critter out of the bog and on dry firm earth. Then we knew enough to get the hell out of there, because the dumb brute would invariably try to put us up a tree.

“Roosevelt sure found the banks bogged down on March 4, 1933. Now that the bankers are up on dry land, they are snorting and bawling and charging Roosevelt, for all the world like a dumb cow.”

## XII

### ECONOMY—DRASTIC OR OTHERWISE

About the most bandied word that gets repeated abuse, in every political campaign, is the word "economy." All candidates and all political parties, **always** in **every** campaign, promise it. Mr. Landon, like all other candidates, favored economy, so he said, and he got so enthusiastic about it that he hung some descriptive adjectives on it. In 1932, he promised "drastic" economy, whatever that meant.

Now, be it known that Alfred M. Landon is by nature, economical, drastically so—with his own money. Several years ago he arrived at Lawrence, Kansas to watch a football game at old Alma Mater. His fellow alumnus suggested they take a cab to the Phi Gam House, but Alf suggested they walk; that he knew a lot of the businessmen and they could get some drinks. His companion said they had a couple of quarts of liquor in his gladstone, but Alf said to save that for later on, and insisted on mooching his drinks, as he made his meandering way, among the bazaars on Massachusetts Street, toward the good old fraternity.

Governor Alf M. Landon used to send the collector for The Topeka Daily Capitol and The Topeka State Journal down to the State Treasury. Alf got one of each paper at his home and another at the office. The state auditor got sore at Alf about something or other and quit approving Alf's personal paper bills.

When Alf was nearing the end of his first term and was coming up for reelection, he decided that it

would be an inspiring sight for the younger generation, in the rural schools, to have a nice picture of their Governor to look at between note passing and whispers, while teacher was putting the writing lesson on the blackboard. So he ordered a supply of glossy prints, displaying his handsome masculine pulchritude, and O. K.'d the photographer's statement billed to The State of Kansas.

And again, when Alf and the boys pulled off that kidnapping hoax to get the people's mind off of his association with the Finneys and the looted State Treasury, the photographer's bill for a bunch of glossy prints of the daughter—heroine of the episode—was also approved by the Governor, for payment out of the taxpayers' money.

Mr. Landon is wealthy enough to drive a Rolls-Royce if he so desired. He does, in fact, drive good automobiles, but when he went out among the farmers he loves so much, he drove an old Ford. That was his own business, I suppose. He could ride a bicycle if he thought it would help him to keep the "common touch." But when the state was furnishing a Cadillac for the Governor's use, the State Auditor kicked about paying an \$8.00 bill, to the local Ford dealer, for repairs on the brakes of the Governor's personal "campaign" car.

Most politicians pay the expenses of their personal workers, or promise them jobs, if the henchman has sufficient funds to meet his or her own expenses. Alf had a system that beat that. He ordered their expense items paid out of state funds and charged to the state's vocational schools.

To provide the doctors and nurses in the Topeka State Hospital with suitable reading matter, Alf approved Order No. 394 dated December 1, 1933 for \$94.83 worth of magazines.



And when Will J. French, the state auditor refused to permit this petty graft, Governor Landon turned on him, with the results mentioned elsewhere in this tale.

Don't ever think Alfred M. Landon is such a silly chump as to pay out of his own pocket any salary, or other honorarium, for personal publicity, which publicity, in passing, is the only reason we find him where he is today. He knows the power of ballyhoo. But what was the use to pay for it himself? So to write his speeches, (when he couldn't get out of making them) and to write the glowing stories and news items and alleged interviews, he maintained a staff of downright skillful publicity men. These writers were carried on the rolls of the Fire Marshal's office as investigators, or as clerks in the Vehicle Commissioner's department, and Mr. Kansan paid their salaries.

Alfred is surely drastically economical with his own funds.

But he wasn't a bit "tight" about spending the millions of dollars sent into Kansas by the national administration. He thankfully used all he could get and begged for more, manipulating the handling of the funds in building up a personal political machine.

Maybe the Hearst employees, who are furnishing the present feast of bombast, can explain to the American people how Landon could so enthusiastically use federal aid and now come out and condemn the use of it. Kansans think that if Governor Landon objected to the Rooseveltian "wild reckless spending," the Governor should have refused to accept the grants. Why, he couldn't get the money to pay his current bills until The Home Owners' Loan Corporation and The Farm Credit Administration got in operation and furnished

distressed property owners with funds so they could pay their taxes.

Landon, in 1932, promised a thorough investigation of the Highway Department, and induced the legislature to make a \$50,000.00 appropriation for that purpose. Landon appointees spent the money all right. The only development of the investigation, that the taxpayer ever heard of, for his fifty thousand, was the discovery that a careless clerk had accidentally spilled some ink on an unimportant record.

\$200,000.00 spent on a farcical impeachment proceeding; \$18,000.00 to lawyers selected by him, to protect him, in the bond scandal; \$12,000.00 expense to the state, for a special session of the legislature to pass one law that he prevented being passed at the regular session—the mortgage moratorium law.

“He promised economy; he gave economy.” So says John D. M. Hamilton!

Another X-ray peep into the soul of this man is shown by the following incident. It shows his twisted idea of economy and his disregard for laws, enacted by his own legislature, and approved by him as Governor.

The members of the 1933 session of the Kansas legislature just had to enact something to which they could point, either with or without pride, as a gesture, that would appear like they had carried out their usual bi-annual pledge of “economy.” So they passed a law that tended to reduce traffic problems and cut down the state’s expenses for motor fuel.

Chapter 174, Session Laws of 1933, reads as follows:

“Section 1. That no person or employee of the state or county or any governmental subdivision shall operate or drive or cause to

be operated or driven any state, county, or other publicly owned automobile, automobile bus, motor bus, or other motor vehicle for private use or for private business or for pleasure.”

“Section 2. Any person violating any of the provisions of this act shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction shall be fined in a sum not more than twenty-five dollars (\$25) for each offense.”

“Section 3. It is hereby made the duty of every sheriff, deputy sheriff, and every and all other law enforcement officers of any county, city or township in this state to enforce the provisions of this act.”

“Section 4. That this act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the official state paper.”

So the state employees had their choice of getting themselves a car, riding the busses or walking. Dr. M. L. Perry, Superintendent of the Topeka State Hospital, “did not choose to walk in 1933” or any other time. Evidently he put up a howl about it. Maybe some “sheriff, deputy sheriff or other law enforcement officer” took this law seriously, and thought Dr. Perry could obey the law, as well as one of the boys driving a highway department truck.

At any rate, if you examine the records in the archives of the Kansas State Board of Administration, of which the governor is, ex-officio, the chairman, you will find an ORDER, (as we lawyers say) in words and figures as follows, to-wit:

“Topeka, Kansas, July 15, 1933.

IN RE: TOPEKA STATE HOSPITAL,  
TOPEKA, KANSAS.

ORDERED, By the State Board of Administration, that in addition to the salary allowed Dr. M. L. Perry for his regular services as Superintendent of the Topeka State Hospital, that he be allowed the use of the state car for his own personal use."

And that order, patient reader, bears the scrawling personal signature of ALF M. LANDON.

"What's the Constitution between friends?"

If the present Kansas State Auditor, (Landon appointed) in whose vaults these records are kept, refuses to show you these items, drop up to my office at Wichita, Kansas, and I will show you true and/or photostatic copies of them. These items are petty, it is true, but men of presidential timber do not stoop to petty things. Aside from a sense of cunning, a fox is not noted for intelligence or accomplishments.

## XIII

### PLATFORMS AND PLEDGES

It is said, by critics of President Roosevelt, that he has not conducted his administration according to the 1932 Democratic Platform. Perhaps not. A political platform, adopted by a convention of about one thousand delegates is, of necessity, a compromise, and by the nature of our political system, the so-called platform, is an instrument intended to sound well, catch votes and still not say anything definite. An elected party candidate has lots of leeway for varied action and still can claim to be on the platform. A good platform writer (like Wm. Allen White of Kansas) is one who is so skillful in the use of the English language, as to make the words sound like what the listener wants to hear.

The 1932 Democratic platform was adopted in early summer. President Roosevelt was inaugurated on March 4, 1933, about seven months after the Chicago convention. A crisis had developed between the two dates. As between a slavish adherence to some reactionary's interpretation of an ambiguous party platform, and the saving of the nation and our social structure itself, I cannot see anything fundamentally wrong in saving the country and letting the platform go hang.

I have yet to have pointed out to me, except in vague and indefinite generalities, wherein President Roosevelt violated the spirit of his party's platform. It is true, that platform did not pledge the administration to declare a bank holiday, as the first official act of

the new president. But who had the slightest idea in June, 1932, that such action would be necessary in March, 1933? The platform did not specifically declare for a devaluation of the dollar in relationship to gold. But how was anyone to know, in June of 1932, what foreign countries were going to do, to necessitate an alteration in our financial policy? The Democratic Platform declared for a "sound currency" and I can see nothing unsound about our present currency. Evidently the Republicans can't either as they merely object to any further devaluation of the dollar. So does President Roosevelt. If you don't think so ask the inflationists, Father Coughlin, Dr. Townsend, Senator Thomas and others.

Thus, the President gets cussed by one group because he goes too far and by another group because he does not go far enough. But the great masses of Americans are pretty well pleased and satisfied.

But before the present Republican leaders make themselves entirely absurd, by raising the question of fulfilling campaign and party pledges, they better look into the record of their candidate.

In 1932 an independent candidate for Governor of Kansas raised objection to the high price charged for automobile license tags. He argued over his own radio station that the price should be materially reduced. At the time the independent candidate started making the Jayhawkers license tag conscious, the price of the tags for the cheapest cars was \$8.00 up. The Independent proposed a \$3.00 tag for "Lizzie," and to graduate the price upward on all automobiles. The Independent was **not** acting selfishly because he, himself, drove a 16-cylinder, custom built Cadillac.

But Alf M. Landon underbid the Independent

candidate. He took a valiant stand for 60c license tags. The license tag revenue goes on the building and maintenance of the highways. Any thinking person knew that such loss of revenue would completely disable the state's road program. But, I am sorry to say, some folks can't see through rank demagoguery, and Landon got a lot of votes on his 60c license pledge. Of course, no such law was passed. Landon knew when he made this pledge to the voters that he could not and would not live up to such a promise.

So Kansans were somewhat amused, and slightly bored, as they listened to John Hamilton's encomium on Alfred Mossman Landon, in these words:

"There is nothing easier than to break a contract once you have convinced yourself that contracts can be broken \* \* \* There is nothing easier than to promise all things to all men when your conscience is sufficiently elastic. There is nothing easier than to take any means at hand to secure votes once you have decided you value votes more than your own self respect."

And John Hamilton ought to know, after being forced by circumstances to play on the same team with Alf Landon in the political game. No Democrat, Progressive, or Independent could have written sentiments more applicable to Alf M. Landon than those above quoted.

Landon promised economy and gave Kansas rank extravagance;

He promised an investigation of the highway department and gave us white wash;

He promised to take the highway department out of politics. He took it out of bi-partisan politics and

made it an air tight political machine, with money furnished by the national government;

He promised to consolidate boards and commissions. He consolidated boards and commissions maintained by fees, but not one board, commission or department maintained by taxation;

He guarded his own remarks about his opponents, and appeared as in a virtuous cloak of tolerance, while his henchmen and ward heelers conducted the most contemptible and filthiest campaign in the history of the State of Kansas;

He promised to enforce the laws, and gave us a bond scandal that shook the state;

He declared the prohibitory liquor law **could** and **must** be enforced. He did nothing to enforce the liquor laws, but uses those laws to wreak vengeance on disfavored communities.

He claimed to be, and to continue to cooperate with the Roosevelt administration, while undermining the national administration in every conceivable under-handed sub rosa manner.

In his campaign for re-election as Governor, he frequently claimed he had taken the highway department out of debt. As a matter of fact, the Kansas highway department had never been in debt—until during Landon's administration. Landon was inaugurated early in January, 1933. By April 1st, 1933, the highway department was in the red for the first time, and in the sum of \$1,574,000.00. With all the aid furnished by the Federal government, Landon's highway department, on January 1, 1934, was still "unbalanced" by over a million dollars. What would have



happened to Kansas, if the old gentleman with the striped pants, star spangled vest and long goatee had not come to the rescue, is unpleasant to think about.

With such a candidate the Republican Party, in 1936, must discuss with the utmost care the breaking of campaign pledges.

## XIV

### STRONG ARM METHODS

Charles Dickens pointed out, in *Oliver Twist*, that the thief was the first to raise the hue and cry. Often one is accused of doing something which the accuser would do if he had the chance and therefore thinks the other fellow is doing the same. It is but natural for a fox to accuse the old faithful watch of plundering the poultry yard.

And as this momentous political campaign now gets going, the reactionary forces are making nasty insinuations about the national administration having control of the radio facilities. Judging from a lot of balderdash and bunkum I hear on my receiving set, I would say that the Federal Communications Commission is doing a very poor and lax job of censuring. But let me tell you how censuring the radio is **really** done in Kansas.

In the primary campaign of 1934, a Republican candidate was running against Governor Landon for the nomination. The opposing candidate was broadcasting every evening from a radio station in Kansas City, Kansas, and his remarks about Alf M. Landon did not sound exactly like ringing praise.

This candidate was required to submit his manuscript to the station manager an hour or so before his set time to make his speeches. One evening this candidate announced, that the next evening he would give the listening audience the facts about the \$10,000.00 check that Ronald Finney delivered, just before the break of the bond scandal, to Alf Landon's home.

On the next evening, the station manager, youthful, handsome as Clark Gable and as big as Max Schmeling, was all flustered. He nervously read the manuscript and vetoed a couple of pages that dealt with Landon and the Finney check.

The candidate in question took the matter calmly enough, but a couple of his associates reared up on their hind legs and began to orate around the studio, about freedom of speech, tyranny and oppression, in a manner that made Patrick Henry's "Call to Arms" sound like a whispering campaign. The "dark and handsome" who operated the radio station actually cried:

"I suppose **you** are going to sue me, too," he wailed. "Listen! Today a couple of tough looking guys came down here from Topeka and said, if I let one word be said about Landon and the Finney \$10,000.00 check, they would sue me for libel and have my broadcasting license revoked. Boys, all the money I have in the world is tied up in this station, and I just can't afford to have any trouble with Governor Landon and his men. For God's sake, boys, help me out, and don't get that bunch on my neck."

The same men who backed Landon for Governor, are now backing him for President. Do you want them in charge of the Federal Communications Commission? They already have the press.

## SPEAKING OF TAXES

The tax collector has never been a very popular official. Human beings hate paying taxes almost as badly as paying over-parking police assessments.

I do not object to squandering twenty dollars to entertain a party of out-of-town friends, but I lose my temper when I pay a two cent state tax on a package of cigarettes. When I go to the County Treasurer to pay the taxes on my real and personal property, I feel symptoms of angina pectoris. And when I compile the data and pay my income tax, federal and state, I am in imminent danger of apoplexy.

But on sober second thought, I am glad I have something to pay taxes on—and with. During those “three long years” prior to 1933, income tax, gasoline tax and similar taxes didn’t worry me, because I didn’t have any occasion to pay them. Paying a tax on income signifies that you have an income to pay on. If you pay gasoline tax, it connotes the conclusion you drive an automobile or else you would not be buying gasoline. After listening to the recent Landon “publicity,” one living in another state would be justified in concluding that Kansans don’t have to pay state taxes. But the citizen of the Jayhawk state is just the same “abused taxpayer” as in any other state. He has the same tearful sympathy of candidates—before election. To me, it becomes really monotonous to hear candidates for all offices, from township trustees to U.S. Senators, tell how they are going to lift the tax load from the stooping shoulders of the exhausted taxpayer, and im-

mediately, upon entering office begin to figure out new and untapped sources of revenue. Sometime I hope to be able to vote for a candidate who will be honest and run on this platform: "If you elect me I will do as I please."

Following the orthodox political procedure—promising to reduce taxes is tolerated. But to claim that he has reduced taxes, in the face of a contradictory record, is imposing on good nature and insulting to the intelligence. An administration may change the method. It may shift the burden. But with our social structure growing more and more complex; with the constant demands on governments—national, state, and local—ever increasing, don't let any spell binder or pen artist kid you about the governmental unit spending less, except, in case where money is spent for emergency purposes. For governments create not one item of wealth. Every penny spent by every governmental unit must first be collected from the taxpayers.

As Governor of Kansas, Landon has merely followed the beaten path, and line of least resistance. He inaugurated neither new nor different means of raising revenue. However, he has had the benefit of increased revenues over his immediate predecessor.

Although his administration had to "go in debt" by borrowing, temporarily, from the School Fund Commission to pay the current bills of the administration due July 1, 1934, as elsewhere stated, such financial astringency was due to the inability of property owners, to pay their assessments to the 105 county treasurers, out of which general tax the state gets its "cut."

When the Home Owners' Loan Corporation got to functioning, advancing money for delinquent taxes on homes, and when the Farm Credit Administration got

organized and loaned the farmers the money to pay their taxes, then the county treasurers were able to send the state treasurer the state assessments.

Realizing the antipathy of most people to reading tabulations of figures, I will not annoy my readers with such. But at the risk of boredom let me call attention to the fact that the taxes, delinquent and current, advanced by the H.O.L.C. to small home owners, in Sedgwick County alone, amounted to more than \$600,000.00. In the State of Kansas, such taxes advanced by the H.O.L.C. totaled over \$2,000,000.00.

I do not have the accurate or complete figures on the sums advanced by the Federal Land Bank, or Production Credit Administration, or through the functions of the Federal Housing Administrations, but I know the sums to be enormous. The F.H.A. alone has handled applications representing an amount of nearly nine million dollars—over two million in my home county of Sedgwick.

Due to the adoption of a constitutional amendment, authorizing a graduated state income tax, (enthusiastically and actively supported by Woodring and openly ignored and secretly opposed by Landon) the state income was greatly augmented. According to the figures before me, the Landon Administration received from state income tax alone, approximately \$1,409,000.00—which no former Governor of Kansas had available.

And, in addition, due to steadily improving business conditions, taxpayers generally, not recipients of federal loans, have been able to pay their taxes.

And Landon has had the benefit of a decided in-

crease in indirect taxes, such as corporation, cigarette, insurance, etc.

And lastly, but by no means least, the fact that during the past three years the federal government has expended, on Kansas roads and highways alone, the tidy little sum of \$28,765,566.00, enabled the state to conserve its funds, while still collecting three cents per gallon on gasoline—and from \$4.50 **up**, for automobile licenses, instead of the sixty cent tags Landon promised.

The Kansas Governor is frequently spoken of in the oil fields as “Lucky Landon.” The title is still fitting in politics. The personal breaks have been in his favor. But before the influx of federal money, quickly liquidating delinquent taxes, and priming the pump of commerce and business, Alfred had cause to do some of that worrying that John D. M. Hamilton mentioned at Cleveland. School teachers were serving the cause of education, their pay delayed, and not knowing whether they would ever be paid, for the state administration was doing nothing and seemed not to have any ideas as to what **should** or **could** be done. Landon and Hamilton do not tell you that it was Federal money that kept Kansas schools open the past few years. Cities and towns invited burglary and robbery by turning off their street lights because they had no money to pay for electricity.

Once, again, Lucky Landon had his rabbit’s foot in his pocket. Again the fox out-distanced the hounds.

But you all know the story about the man that “took in too much territory,” and the United States of America is a **lot** of territory.

## XVI

### FOXY BUSINESS!

Although Alf M. Landon attended the law school, at the University of Kansas, he did not follow up the law, as a profession, but entered the field of business. It was probably just as well. His dislike for a fight in the open, together with his halting uncertain command of English, would have proven a handicap in the Court room. Unable to make a speech, and being too downright lazy to take lessons and learn the art of vocal expression, it could not be expected that he would become a second Clarence Darrow or William J. Fallon. So he went into business.

There were other reasons for the choice of career. His family had a huge start in the oil and natural gas business, and parental influence, contacts and financial aid were not to be sneezed at.

One of the early reported business ventures of this young oil man was in what is known as the Sorghum-Hollow oil pool. Alf went in partnership with an honest gentleman, an old friend of the family, whom we will call Mr. Derrick. They acquired some acreage and, with Mr. Derrick furnishing the tools, drilled two oil wells on a fifty-fifty basis. Production fell off and Derrick and Alf had decided they would abandon the lease as it wasn't paying cost of operation.

Just at that time a certain gentleman from Pennsylvania appeared in Independence, Kansas, with some cash to invest in oil properties. Alf contacted him and interested him in the Derrick-Landon acreage. Then, keeping the pilgrim from Pennsylvania out of sight, he went to Derrick saying the land owner wanted a release of their oil and gas lease. He argued that they



must keep a good reputation for fair dealing with the farmers, in order to be able to obtain more leases. Trusting his partner, Derrick went to Landon's office and signed the release.

Thereupon, Alfred went straight to the Pennsylvanian and sold him the lease for several thousand dollars, C.I.F. (meaning cash in the fist). Did he divide the proceeds of this transaction with his partner? Well, what do **you** think?

But the story leaked out. Derrick met Alfred in a downtown drug store and read his pedigree, in words such as oil men know how to use. Among other things, Alf was called a crooked, dishonest, doublecrossing thief and admonished not to say a word or he would be whipped within an inch of his life. Derrick is said to have elaborated on the whipping theme, to the extent of saying that if Alfred was not a pampered, rich man's son, a weakling and a sissy, Derrick would thrash him anyway.

Landon furthered his business interests and connections by marrying into a prominent Standard Oil family. Amply financed, fortunate in business connections, and by such methods as he used on the man we have referred to as Derrick, Alfred has not done so badly financially. It cannot be truthfully said that he has not been fairly successful as an oil operator. But his press agents' claim lately, that Alfred M. Landon is the biggest independent oil operator in Kansas, is just a lot of hay.

Alfred's business acumen was in evidence during Clyde Reed's Administration, as Governor of Kansas, when Alf, by reason of having been Governor Allen's secretary, was posing as Governor Reed's unofficial representative. In fact, his commercial sagacity came to the attention of the Assistant Budget Director.

Probably, after reading of, and listening to, all this budget-balancing bunk, baloney, bull, ballyhoo, and balderdash, you may think that Governor Landon was the original author, inventor and creator of the Kansas budget. But Kansas had a budget in 1925.

The Assistant Budget Director checked up on Alf's truck buying proclivities, and reported to the head of the highway department that the highway department was paying \$1,000.00 more, for inferior trucks, than the price for which far better trucks could be purchased. Getting no results from the highway director, the Assistant Budget Director took the matter to Governor Reed, himself, and showed him that this "irregularity" was costing the State of Kansas \$40,000.00 She also reported to Governor Reed that Tom Bigger, a Kansas City, Kansas politician, had made this statement:

"Alf Landon and I are making more money under Governor Clyde Reed than I have made under any Governor of Kansas."

It may easily be imagined that Governor Reed was not pleased. Just what Reed said to Landon I have no way of knowing. But from then on Alf Landon's main object for living seemed to be to avenge himself on the Assistant Budget Director. The fact that she was a lady made no difference. With the possible exception of an opponent of Landon's in the Governorship race, never was a human being so viciously and ruthlessly attacked, in true Alf Landon fashion—sub rosa and behind her back. Powerful pressure was put on Governor Reed to discharge this appointee. But because she was capable, honest, and sincere, Governor Reed declined. Finally, however, in disgust, and to save Governor Reed further trouble, she resigned and left the state.

She will not do candidate Landon any good in California!

Like many personally ambitious men, Alf M. Landon likes to hob-nob and be seen with men of wealth. I mean **real** wealth, not just a paltry few thousands that constitute affluence here on the prairies. He is especially partial to "big-shot" bankers, although he feels himself far superior to the officers of the First National Bank on Main Street. This is evidenced by his remarks to the American Bankers Association in convention at Chicago, as elsewhere quoted in this story.

It is not known for sure whether it was Landon's craving for the association of the great, or "in-law influence" that caused him to fight for the oil pro-ration law, as drawn by the Standard, and one or two other huge oil companies, and to which independent producers were opposed, then to turn and lead the fight against the gas-carrier's law, which the independents wanted.

The oil industry came to the realization that more oil was being produced than could be utilized or stored. The industry sought to save itself by cutting down production, the same as farmers did on wheat and pork. The oil men, as a whole, endeavored to work out an equitable plan of reduction, by "pro-rating" the amount of oil pumped to a percentage of what had been regularly produced.

There is, of course, a conflict between the big boys in oil and the comparatively small, so-called, "Independents." Alf Landon belongs with the latter. But as he betrayed the Progressives into the hands of the Old Guard, and as he secured the "Derrick" lease in the Sorghum-Hollow pool, just so he has sold the Independent oil men down the river at every opportunity.

The Landon legislature passed a law, setting up machinery to enforce something resembling a fair pro-ration. Alfred M. Landon, the oil producer, had a number of producing wells, and by any standard of ethics and right and wrong, was as much bound by the provisions of the law as any other oil producer. The fact that he happened to be Governor did not exempt him. A governor has NO special prerogative to VIOLATE laws, which he, HIMSELF, approves as Chief Executive.

I am no oil gauger. I don't know personally how much oil the Landon wells produced. But I do know, that it is common talk, that, while neighboring wells were pinched down and production curtailed, the Landon wells were operated to capacity.

Recently, I asked a business man, connected directly with the oil business, if it were really true that Landon ran his wells full tilt while offset wells were held down under pro-ration. He looked me squarely in the eye, wondering if I was trying to kid him. Deciding I was sincere in my inquiry he snorted, "Hell yes, it is true!" The fact that I questioned it indicated, to him, my naivete.

Talk about the Harding Teapot Dome scandal stinking to high heaven! Those boys were rank amateurs.

Another big business enterprise that has enjoyed tender care, at the hands of the Landon administration, in Kansas, is the so-called "School Book Trust." Although Kansas taxpayers have provided a magnificent printing plant, fully capable of producing the school books for Kansas school children, every move in that direction has been headed off by the Landon crowd, and the big publishers continue to dominate the field.

What difference does it make to Alf M. Landon, who has never known want, if the farmer must take

the proceeds of 40 dozen eggs to buy the books for little Alice to use in school? What if it takes 50% of the month's income of a man working on a W.P.A. project at \$32.00 a month, to contribute to the dividends of the big publishers? Anyone who advocates free school books, or school books furnished by the state to the schools, at cost, is just a damned communist anyway. The State and the Federal governments must not interfere with business. If the poor families have to do without proper food and clothing, in order to maintain the present school text book set up—well, they just should not be poor. They ought to be born rich like Mr. Landon.

During the Woodring Administration, an investigating committee was appointed, by the Kansas Legislature, to investigate the operations of the school book oligarchy in the state of sunshine and sunflowers. The report, of this committee, was anything but complimentary and flattering to the boys who supply the school kiddies with the instruments for acquiring knowledge. The "head-man" of the school text book crew was very active in behalf of the Landon candidacy for Governor. Rumors persist that this group "fed the kitty" to the tune of \$5,000.00 toward the war chest of their choice for Governor. Any further investigation of the school book mess has been emphatically "shush-shushed" by the great budget-balancer. Within the last school year, there has been still another state wide change in the text books used, and, while parents protested and objected, that was all the good it did them.

While these details, as to Kansas headaches, may not interest the reader in Oregon, New Jersey, or elsewhere, I mention them to indicate the inevitable course our national affairs will take if the voters make a mistake on November 3, 1936.

## XVII

### —AND ANOTHER THING!

This, ladies and gentlemen, is an abridged version of the tale of a Fox, It is not complete for several reasons. This little tale might get into the hands of boys and girls and, moreover, there are certain limitations to and inhibitions on the use of the United States mail.

My purpose has been to point out just a few of the reasons why Alfred Mossman Landon, for President of the United States, just **will not do**.

I realize, that I am going to be highly popular with Landon and those who do his thinking for him, when this book gets into the hands of the public. However, if he, they, or any or all of them, desire (as Patsy Kelly says) to "make something out of it," I might have to publish a sequel, containing other facts and figures, which would make what I have said about the gentleman in this little tale, sound like ringing praise.

It cannot be denied that the office of the President of the United States calls for a man of the highest executive type. The responsibilities are tremendous. The strain, upon the individual who holds that great office, will kill off the strongest—as evidenced by the fact that no ex-president ever lives very long. Truly, the White House is no place for a politician of city-ward limitations.

Franklin D. Roosevelt has occupied that White House since March 4, 1933. No one can deny that he has shown great executive ability. None can deny that he has attacked new and hazardous conditions, fearlessly.

There are some phases, of the so-called New Deal,

to which I do not subscribe. There are some of the "New Dealers" that do not shuffle nor deal the cards as I would like.

But in the midst of the hue and cry, the bedlam of ballyhoo, the organized paid for propaganda, being screamed at the people by selfish and vengeful interests, I feel the urge to raise my feeble voice, in protest, against the people being stampeded into doing something that we, as a nation, would profoundly regret. And I say to you, that whether you like Roosevelt or not; whether you favor the New Deal or an old deal, or prefer to just call it a mis-deal, for Heaven's sake do not deliberately vote upon yourselves a **RAW DEAL**, as you may expect, if the darling of the Liberty League, the hero of the Kansas Bond Scandal, the straw man of the Hearst ambitions, the typical court house politician, should, by some peculiar turn of fate, be placed in control of the destinies of our great nation, at this critical time.

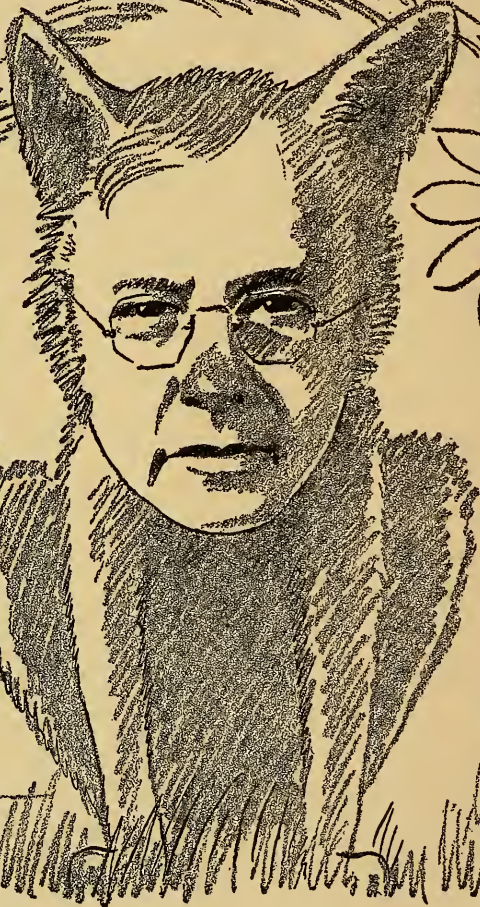
If we are to change our national policies let it be done under able, competent, HONEST and the BEST leadership obtainable—not under the very WORST.

For even if the Cleveland Convention had nominated a capable and otherwise suitable man, the people of America would not tolerate a potential President who would be under the dominion and control of the Hitler of American Journalism, Wm. Randolph Hearst. But to offer a candidate, not only bearing the Hearst brand, but having a record and personality like the man who was nominated, would indicate the real Republican leaders are not at all hopeful of success in 1936.

What kind of a President would Fox Landon make?

We'll NEVER know!

# THE TALE OF A FOX



















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